ADVENT

ol. XI. No. 3 August 1954

A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future

Subscription : Inland, Rupees Five; Foreign, Twelve Shillings Six Pence
Inland : Single Copy, Rupee One and Annas Eight

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The Advent

All turns and winds towards his predestined ends
In Nature's fixed inevitable course
Decreed since the beginning of the worlds
In the deep essence of created things:
Even there shall come as a high crown of all
The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.

Savitri XI. I.

The ADVENT

AUGUST 1954

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If earnestly you say to the Divine, "I want only Thee", the Divine will arrange the circumstances in such a way that you are compelled to be sincere.

THE MOTHER

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THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF ART

TRUE art means the expression of beauty in the material world. In a world wholly converted, that is to say, expressing integrally the divine reality, art must serve as the revealer and teacher of this divine beauty in life. In other words, the artist must be able to enter into communion with the Divine and receive the inspiration as to what should be the form or forms for the material realisation of the divine beauty. At the same time, in expressing true beauty in the physical, he also sets an example, becomes an instrument of education. Art not only creates beauty, but educates the taste of people to find true beauty, the essential beauty that expresses the divine truth. That is the true role of art. But between that and what it is now there is a great difference.

The decline comes in the normal course of evolution which follows a spiral movement. From the beginning of the last century to the middle of it,

* Based on the Mother's Talks.

art became totally a debased thing, commercial, obscure, ignorant, something very far from its true nature and function. But the spirit of art cannot die; only as it rose as a movement of protest or revolt, the forms it chose were equally bad. In attempting to counteract the general debasing of taste it went to the other extreme, as is the character of all movements of nature. One was a servile copy of nature, it was pointed out or not even that. In those days it used to be called photographic art, if one were to abuse it. But now it is no longer a term of abuse, for photography has developed into a consummate art. Neither could it be truly called realism, for there are realistic paintings which belong to a very high order. That art was conventional, artificial, lifeless. Now the reaction to this movement said: we do not concern ourselves with physical life any more, the reality as we see with outward eyes is no longer our business; we want instead to express the vital life, the mental life. Hence came a whole host of reformers and rebels —cubists, surrealists, futurists and so on—who sought to create art with their head. They forgot the simple truth that in art it is not the head that commands, but the feeling of beauty in the heart. So art landed into the the most absurd, ridiculous and frightful of worlds. Indeed with the two wars behind us we have gone further in that direction. Each war has brought down a world in decomposition. And now we seem to be in the very heart of chaos.

Perhaps we are at the bottom of the curve and it is time to mount up. This disintegration is a necessary prelude; it is even from a certain point of view a better condition than that of the epoch of Queen Victoria or the Second Empire in France, the age of the practical successful bourgeoisie, of snug contentment and dull mediocrity, of death in life. As I say, the movement of progress follows a curve. In a certain epoch some fine things are expressed in a fine way. Then follows an epoch which is tired of the old things, wants to find new things and express in a new way. The age of Louis XIV, for example, was an age dominated by the sense of artistic creation and it represented the peak of a certain type of the truly beautiful in art and life. In the course of social evolution other ideas, other needs appeared—those of a commercial age. So the curve took a downward course. For there is nothing so antagonistic to art as commerce. For the association of commerce with art means the popularisation of something which is exceptional: it is putting within the reach of all and sundry a thing which is understood and appreciated only by the chosen few, the élite. Perhaps it is because of this, because art has no outlet in the world, it has in these days turned to other directions,

into the domains of the mental and the vital, into sideways and bypaths of consciousness. When, however, better conditions prevail, when instead of the spirit of mercantilism, there appears upon earth the sense of a more beautiful reality, then art will be reborn and come to its own. That seems to be still a long way off.

The art of this decadent epoch is what I call mushroom art. You know how mushrooms grow? They grow anywhere and do not seem to form part, for example, of what you cultivate or where you cultivate. Just think of it! There is a spot on the wall which becomes humid and you see it soon covered with this growth. You have a tree which does not get the sunlight, you will find its roots covered with mushrooms. It is a kind of spontaneous growth which is not linked to the spot where it grows. It is not a limb of its environment, but something extraneous added to it. Instead of mushrooms, I could have spoken of parasites: they belong to the same category. You have seen parasite plants? They grow upon trees, they fix themselves there. They have not their own life and organs, they do not draw their food directly from earth, as all normal plants do; they live upon the life of another, make use of the labour of another. There are also animal parasites that live upon another animal, growing and profiting by its labour. Parasites or mushrooms have no raison d'être to be where they are—they are invaders, interpolators, anomalies.

In ancient times, in the great ages, in Greece, for example or even during the Italian Renaissance, particularly, however, in Greece and in Egypt, they erected buildings, constructed monuments for the sake of public utility. Their buildings were meant for the most part to be temples, sanctuaries to lodge their gods and deities. What they had in view was something total, whole and entire, beautiful and complete in itself. That was the purpose of architecture embodying the harmony of sweeping and majestic lines: sculpture was a part of architecture supplying details of expression and even painting came up to complete the expression: but the whole held together in a coordinated unity which was the monument itself. The sculpture was for the monument, the painting was for the monument; it was not that each was separate from the other and existed for itself and one did not know why it was there. In India, when a temple was being built, for example, what was aimed at was a total creation, all the parts combined to give effect to one end, to make a beautiful vesture for God, the one object of their adoration. All the great epochs of art were of this kind. But in modern times, in the latter part of the last century, Art became a matter of business. A painting was done

in order to be sold. You do your paintings, put each one in a frame and place them side by side or group them, that is, lump them together without much reason. The same with regard to sculpture. You do a statue and set it up anywhere without any connection whatsoever with the surrounding. It is always something foreign, extraneous in its setting, like a mushroom or a parasite. The thing in itself may not be quite ugly, but it is out of place, it is not part of an organic whole. We exhibit art today. Indeed, it is exhibitionism, it is the showing off of cleverness, talent, skill, virtuosity. A piece of architecture does not incarnate a living force as it used to do once upon a time. It is no longer the expression of an aspiration, of something that lifts up the spirit nor the expression of the magnificence of the Divine whose dwelling it is meant to be. You build houses here and there and there, pell-mell or somehow juxtaposed without any coordinating idea governing them, without any relation to the environment where they are situated. When you enter a house, it is the same thing. A bit of painting here, a bit of sculpture there, some *objects of art* in one corner, a few others in another. Yes, it is an exhibition, a museum, a kaleidoscopic collection. It gives a shock to the truly sensitive artistic taste.

I do not say that a museum is not necessary or useful. It is a good means of education, that is to say, getting information about what other people or other epochs did. It is an aid to the historic knowledge of things. But it is far from being artistic. A museum is not the place where art can find its highest or its true expression. There is an art which seeks to coordinate, integrate distinct, discrete, contrary objects. It is called decorative art. And in so far as this art is successful, we are a step forward even in these days towards true art.

Here in India things are and should be a little different. In spite of the modern European invasion and in spite of certain lapses in some directions —I may refer to what Sri Aurobindo calls the Ravi Varma interlude— the heart of India is not anglicised or Europeanised. The Calcutta School is a sign—although their attempt is rather on a small scale—yet it is a sign that India's artistic taste, in spite of a modern education, still turns to what is essential and permanent in her culture and civilisation. You have still before you, within your reach, the old temples, the old paintings, to teach you that art creation is meant to express a faith, to give you the sense of totality and organisation. You will note in this connection another fact which is very significant. All these paintings, all these sculptures in caves and temples bear no signature. They were not done with the idea of making a name. To-

day you fix your name to every bit of work you do, announce the event with a great noise in the papers, so that the thing may not be forgotten. In those days the artist did what he had to do, without caring whether posterity would remember his name or not. The work was done in an urge of aspiration towards expressing a higher beauty, above all with the idea of preparing a dwelling fit for the deity whom one invokes. In Europe in the cathedrals of the Middle Age, things were done in the same spirit. There too at that time works were anonymous and bore no signature of the author. If any name came to be preserved, it was more or less by accident.

However, even the commercialism of today, hideous as it is, has an advantage of its own. Commercialism means the mixing together of all parts of the world. It effaces the distinction between Orient and Occident, brings the Orient near to the Occident and the Occident near to the Orient. With the exchange of goods, there happens an exchange of ideas and even of habits and manners. In ancient days Rome conquered Greece and through that conquest was herself conquered by the Culture and Civilisation of Greece. The thing is happening today on a much greater scale and more intensely perhaps. At one time Japan was educating herself on the American pattern; now that America has conquered Japan physically, she is being conquered by the spirit of Japan; even in objects manufactured in America, you notice the Japanese influence in some way or other.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

28-10-1953

A VEDIC HYMN*

1. O Aswins, to him who *striveth*[1] towards *Yajna*[2] swift-footed lords of *bliss*[3], O much-enjoying Aswins, *become*[4] delight.

2. O strong, *much-destroying*[5] Aswins, with the firm and *brilliant*[6] understanding *take*[7] joy in my words.

3. O *wasters*[8], O sons of Nasuta, arrive, ye fierce of deed, *for I have put myself in Yoga*[9], I have *manifested the flame*.[10]

4. Come, O Indra, of manifold brilliance, here are these *vital juices*[11] put forth, *extend them with the Powers of being, O thou of purified strength*.[12]

5. Come, O Indra, commanded by the understanding and forcibly impelled to the soul-movements of the *full of substantial strength*,[13] the joyously expanding in soul.[14]

6. Come, O Indra, with *force of impulsion*[15] to the soul movements, O *dweller in the brilliance*,[16] uphold our delight in the outpouring of the Soma.

* Rig Veda I. 3. Rishi: Madhuchhandas.

[1] *Riṣ* is either to strive, to injure, to speed or to thrill, quiver or writhe with ecstasy.

[2] *yajva* may mean (1) Lord (2) yoga (3) action (4) sacrifice.

[3] or, good

[4] or, take

[5] *puru* Gr. polus, much—or, freely giving

[6] *śavîrayā*—hailos (Gr.)

[7] or, accept

[8] or, givers

[9] *yuvāku: yu+āku* like *yuvan: yu+an*

[10] *vṛktabarhiḥ* spread or opened and light, force, fire.

[11] *āyavaḥ:* A clear proof that the Soma of the Veda is not primarily the Soma juice, but Amrita.

[12] or, come with Powers of being and with material Force.

[13] *sutāvataḥ:* Either *suta+vān* or *su+tāvān* (cf. *revān*); I take the latter.

[14] *vāghataḥ*—a doubtful word. The rendering given is provisional, deduced from the original force of *vā*.

[15] or, force of excitation or, confirmative, protecting force

[16] For *harivaḥ* cf. *adrivaḥ*

7. O *loving*[17] ones, O upholders of our *activities*,[18] ye general gods, approach, divide the giver's outpoured Soma.

8. O general gods, ye *active ones*[19] *full of substance*,[20] come with speed like lovers to their stalls.

9. O general gods *mighty in force*,[21] who *stumble*[22] not neither do hurt, cleave to the fullness of my *capacity*,[23] O ye who support.

10. Let purifying Saraswati plentiful with florescence of being dwell in *Yajna*[24], rich with the understanding.

11. Inspirer of true intuitions, awakener of right thoughts, Saraswati supporteth the Yajna.

12. Saraswati awakeneth to consciousness by *force of will*[25] Mahas the ocean and shineth out this way and that in all the movements of the understanding.

SRI AUROBINDO

[17] *omāsaḥ: āmaḥ* from *um* to love, foster (cf. *Umā*) *U* to be in width between imperfection + completive or fulfilling *m.* or, kindly

[18] *carṣaṇî:* either (1) vision (2) movement (3) action

[19] *ap* to act and *tur* expressing the agent or else meaning swift

[20] or, most blissful or auspicious
sutamā cf. *tamaḥ, tamisrā* (dense), *tanū, tanva* etc.

[21] *māyāsaḥ:* Lat. *majores* but not in comparative sense. [22] stumble for *sṛdhā* is provisional

[23] *medham:* either (1) sap (2) brain (3) capacity. (cf. *medhā*)

[24] *yajña* either (1) the Lord (2) action [25] or, by thought *ketu, keta* will, intuition, intellect.

THE LADDER OF SELF-TRANSCENDENCE*

THE transcendence of this lower triple being and this lower triple world, to which ordinarily our consciousness and its powers and results are limited,—a transcendence described by the Vedic seers as an exceeding or breaking beyond the two firmaments of heaven and earth,—opens out a hierarchy of infinitudes to which the normal existence of man even in its highest and widest flights is still a stranger. Into that altitude, even to the lowest step of its hierarchy, it is difficult for him to rise. A separation, acute in practice though unreal in essence, divides the total being of man, the microcosm, as it divides also the world-being, the macrocosm. Both have a higher and a lower hemisphere, the *parārdha* and *aparārdha* of the ancient wisdom. The higher hemisphere is the perfect and eternal reign of the Spirit; for there it manifests without cessation or diminution its infinities, deploys the unconcealed glories of its illimitable existence, its illimitable consciousness and knowledge, its illimitable force and power, its illimitable beatitude. The lower hemisphere belongs equally to the Spirit; but here it is veiled, closely, thickly, by its inferior self-expression of limiting mind, confined life and dividing body. The Self in the lower hemisphere is shrouded in name and form; its consciousness is broken up by the division between the internal and external, the individual and universal; its vision and sense are turned outward; its force, limited by division of its consciousness, works in fetters; its knowledge, will, power, delight, divided by this division, limited by this limitation, are open to the experience of their contrary or perverse forms, to ignorance, weakness and suffering. We can indeed become aware of the true Self or Spirit in ourselves by turning our sense and vision inward; we can discover too the same Self or Spirit in the external world and its phenomena by plunging them there also inward through the veil of names and forms to that which dwells in these or else stands behind them. Our normal consciousness through this inward look may become by reflection aware of the infinite being, consciousness and delight of the Self and share in its passive or static infinity of these things. But we can only to a very limited extent share

* *Synthesis of Yoga*, Chapter XXXIII (*Arya* Vol. IV), revised by Sri Aurobindo

in its active or dynamic manifestation of knowledge, power and joy. Even this static identity by reflection cannot, ordinarily, be effected without a long and difficult effort and as the result of many lives of progressive self-development; for very firmly is our normal consciousness bound to the law of its lower hemisphere of being. To understand the possibility of transcending it at all, we must restate in a practical formula the relations of the worlds which constitute the two hemispheres.

All is determined by the Spirit, for all from subtlest existence to grossest matter is manifestation of the Spirit. But the Spirit, Self or Being determines the world it lives in and the experiences of its consciousness, force and delight in that world by some poise—among many possible—of the relations of Purusha and Prakriti, Soul and Nature,—some basic poise in one or other of its own cosmic principles. Poised in the principle of Matter, it becomes the physical self of a physical universe in the reign of a physical Nature; Spirit is then absorbed in its experience of Matter; it is dominated by the ignorance and inertia of the tamasic Power proper to physical existence. In the individual it becomes a materialised soul, *annamaya puruṣa*, whose life and mind have developed out of the ignorance and inertia of the material principle and are subject to their fundamental limitations. For life in Matter works in dependence on the body; mind in Matter works in dependence on the body and on the vital or nervous being; spirit itself in Matter is limited and divided in its self-relation and its powers by the limitations and divisions of this matter-governed and life-driven mind. This materialised soul lives bound to the physical body and its narrow superficial external consciousness, and it takes normally the experiences of its physical organs, its senses, its matter-bound life and mind, with at most some limited spiritual glimpses, as the whole truth of existence.

Man is a spirit, but a spirit that lives as a mental being in physical Nature; he is to his own self-consciousness a mind in a physical body. But at first is this mental being materialised and he takes the materialised soul, *annamaya puruṣa*, for his real self. He is obliged to accept, as the Upanishad expresses it, Matter for the Brahman because his vision here sees Matter as that from which all is born, by which all lives and to which all return in their passing. His natural highest concept of Spirit is an Infinite, preferably an inconscient Infinite, inhabiting or pervading the material universe (which alone it really knows), and manifesting by the power of its presence all these forms around him. His natural highest conception of himself is a vaguely conceived soul or spirit, a soul manifested only by

the physical life's experiences, bound up by with physical phenomena and forced on its dissolution to return by an automatic necessity to the vast indeterminateness of the Infinite. But because he has the power of self-development, he can rise beyond these natural conceptions of the materialised soul; he can supplement them with a certain derivative experience drawn from supra-physical planes and worlds. He can concentrate in mind and develop the mental part of his being, usually at the expense of the fullness of his vital and physical life and in the end the mind predominates and can open to the Beyond. He can concentrate this self-liberating mind on the Spirit. Here too usually in the process he turns away more and more from his full mental and physical life; he limits or he discourages their possbilities as much as his material foundation in nature will allow him. In the end his spiritual life predominates, destroys his earthward tendency and breaks its ties and limitations. Spiritualised, he places his real existence beyond in other worlds, in the heavens of the vital or mental plane; he begins to regard life on earth as a painful or troublesome incident or passage in which he can never arrive at any full enjoyment of his inner ideal self, his spiritual essence. Moreover, his highest conception of the Self or Spirit is apt to be more or less quietistic; for, as we have seen, it is its static infinity alone that he can entirely experience, the still freedom of Purusha unlimited by Prakriti, the Soul standing back from Nature. There may come indeed some divine dynamic manifestation in him, but it cannot rise entirely above the heavy limitations of physical Nature. The peace of the silent and passive Self is more easily attainable and he can more easily and fully hold it; too difficult for him is the bliss of an infinite activity, the dynamis of an immeasurable Power.

But the spirit can be poised in the principle of Life, not in Matter. The Spirit so founded becomes the vital self of a vital world, the Life-soul of a Life-energy in the reign of a consciously dynamic Nature. Absorbed in the experiences of the power and play of a conscious Life, it is dominated by the desire, activity and passion of the rajasic principle proper to vital existence. In the individual this spirit becomes a vital soul, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, in whose nature the life-energies tyrannise over the mental and physical principles. The physical element in a vital world readily shapes its activities and formations in response to desire and its imaginations, it serves and obeys the passion and power of life and their formations and does not thwart or limit them as it does here on earth where life is a precarious incident in inanimate Matter. The mental element too is moulded and limited by

the life-power, obeys it and helps only to enrich and fulfil the urge of its desires and the energy of its impulses. This vital soul lives in a vital body composed of a substance much subtler than physical matter, it is a substance surcharged with conscious energy, capable of much more powerful perceptions, capacities, sense-activities than any that the gross atomic elements of earth-matter can offer. Man, too, has in himself behind his physical being, subliminal to it, unseen and unknown but very close to it and forming with it the most naturally active part of his existence, this vital soul, this vital nature and this vital body; a whole vital plane connected with the life-world or desire-world is hidden in us, a secret consciousness in which life and desire find their untrammelled play and their easy self-expression and from there throw their influences and formations on our outer life.

In proportion as the power of this vital plane manifests itself in him and takes hold of his physical being, this son of earth becomes a vehicle of the life energy, forceful in his desires, vehement in his passions and emotions, intensely dynamic in his action, more and more the rajasic man. It is possible now for him to awaken in his consciousness to the vital plane and to become the vital soul, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, put on the vital nature and live in the secret vital as well as the visible physical body. If he achieves this change with some fullness or one-pointedness—usually it is under great and salutary limitations, or attended by saving complexities—and without rising beyond these things, without climbing to a supra-vital height from which they can be used, purified, uplifted, he becomes the lower type of Asura or Titan, a Rakshasa in nature, a soul of sheer power and life-energy, magnified or racked by a force of unlimited desire and passion, hunted and driven by an active capacity and colossal rajasic ego, but in possession of far greater and more various powers than those of the physical man in the ordinary more inert earth-nature. Even if he develops mind greatly on the vital plane and uses its dynamic energy for self-control as well as for self-satisfaction, it will still be with an Asuric energism (*tapasyā*) although of a higher type and directed to a more governed satisfaction of the rajasic ego.

But for the vital plane also it is possible, even as on the physical, to rise to a certain spiritual greatness in its own kind. It is open to the vital man to lift himself beyond the conceptions and energies natural to the desire-soul and the desire-plane. He can develop a higher mentality and, within the conditions of the vital being,

concentrate upon some realisation of the Spirit or Self behind or beyond its forms and powers. In this spiritual realisation there would be a less strong necessity of quietism; for there would be a greater possibility of an active effectuation of the bliss and power of the Eternal, mightier and more self-satisfied powers, a richer flowering of the dynamic Infinite. Nevertheless that effectuality could never come anywhere near to a true and integral perfection; for the conditions of the desire-world are like those of the physical improper to the development of the complete spiritual life. The vital being too must develop spirit to the detriment of his fullness, activity and force of life in the lower hemisphere of our existence and turn in the end away from the vital formula, away from life either to the Silence or to an ineffable Power beyond him. If he does not withdraw from life, he must remain enchained by life, limited in his self-fulfilment by the downward pull of the desire-world in its own right alone, and its dominant rajasic principle. On the vital plane also, a perfect perfection is impossible; the soul that attains only so far would have to return to the physical life for a greater experience, a higher self-development, a more direct ascent to the Spirit.

Above matter and life stands the principle of mind, nearer to the secret Origin of things. The Spirit poised in mind becomes the mental self of a mental world and dwells there in the reign of its own pure and luminous mental Nature. There it acts in the intense freedom of the cosmic Intelligence supported by the combined workings of a psycho-mental and a higher emotional mind-force, subtilised and enlightened by the clarity and happiness of the sattwic principle proper to the mental existence. In the individual the spirit so poised becomes a mental soul, *manomaya puruṣa*, in whose nature the clarity and luminous power of the mind acts in its own right independent of any limitation or oppression by the vital or corporeal instruments; it rather rules and determines entirely the forms of its body and the powers of its life. For mind in its own plane is not limited by life and obstructed by matter as it is here in the earth-process. This mental soul lives in a mental or subtle body which enjoys capacities of knowledge, perception, sympathy and interpenetration with other beings hardly imaginable by us and a free, delicate and extensive mentalised sense-faculty not limited by the grosser conditions of the life nature or the physical nature.

Man too has in himself, subliminal, unknown and unseen concealed behind his waking consciousness and visible organism this mental soul, mental nature, mental body and a mental plane, not materialised, in which the

principle of Mind is at home and not as here at strife with a world which is alien to it, obstructive to its freedom and corruptive of its purity and clearness. All the higher faculties of man, his intellectual and psycho-mental being and powers, his higher emotional life awaken and increase in proportion as this mental plane in him presses upon him. For the more it manifests, the more it influences the physical parts, the more it enriches and elevates the corresponding mental plane of the embodied nature. At a certain pitch of its increasing sovereignty it can make man truly man and not merely a reasoning animal; for it gives then its characteristic force to the mental being within us which our humanity is in the inwardly governing but still too hampered essence of its psychological structure.

It is possible for man to awaken to this higher mental consciousness, to become this mental being[1], put on this mental nature and live not only in the vital and physical sheaths, but in this mental body. If there were a sufficient completeness in this transformation he would become capable of a life and a being at least half divine. For he would enjoy powers and a vision and perceptions beyond the scope of this ordinary life and body; he would govern all by the clarities of pure knowledge; he would be united to other beings by a sympathy of love and happiness; his emotions would be lifted to the perfection of the psycho-mental plane, his sensations rescued from grossness, his intellect subtle, pure and flexible, delivered from the deviations of the impure pranic energy and the obstructions of matter. And he would develop too the reflection of a wisdom and bliss higher than any mental joy and knowledge; for he could receive more fully and without our incompetent mind's deforming and falsifying mixture the inspirations and intuitions that are the arrows of the supramental Light and form his perfected mental existence in the mould and power of that vaster splendour. He could then realise too the self or Spirit in a much larger and more luminous and more intimate intensity than is now possible and with a greater play of its active power and bliss in the satisfied harmony of his existence.

[1] I include here in mind, not only the highest range of mind ordinaryly known to man, but yet higher ranges to which he has either no current faculty of admission or else only a partial and mixed reception of some faint portion of their powers,—the illumined mind, the intuition and finally the creative Overmind or Maya which stands far above and is the source of our present existence. If mind is to be understood only as Reason or human intelligence, then the free mental being and its state would be something much more limited and very inferior to the description given here.

And to our ordinary notions this may well seem to be a consummate perfection, something to which man might aspire in his highest flights of idealism. No doubt, it would be a sufficient perfection for the pure mental being in its own character, but it would still fall far below the greater possibilities of the spiritual nature. For here too our spiritual realisation would be subject to the limitations of the mind which is in the nature of a reflected, diluted and diffused or narrowly intensive light, not the vast and comprehensive self-existent luminosity and joy of the spirit. That vaster light, that profounder bliss are beyond the mental reaches. Mind indeed can never be a perfect instrument of the Spirit; a supreme self-expression is not possible in its movements because to separate, divide, limit is its very character. Even if mind could be free from all positive falsehood and error, even if it could be all intuitive and infallibly intuitive, it could still present and organise only half-truths or separate truths and these too not in their own body but in luminous representative figures put together to make an accumulated total or a massed structure. Therefore the self-perfecting mental being here must either depart into pure spirit by the shedding of its lower existence or return upon the physical life to develop in it a capacity not yet found in our mental and psychic nature. This is what the Upanishad expresses when it says that the heavens attained by the mind Purusha are those to which man is lifted by the rays of the sun, the diffused, separated, though intense beams of the supramental truth-consciousness, and from these it has to return to the earthly existence. But the illuminates who renouncing earth-life go beyond through the gateways of the sun, do not return hither. The mental being exceeding his sphere does not return because by that transition he enters a high range of existence peculiar to the superior hemisphere. He cannot bring down its greater spiritual nature into this lower triplicity; for here the mental being is the highest expression of the Self. Here the triple mental, vital and physical body provides almost the whole range of our capacity and cannot suffice for that greater consciousness; the vessel has not been built to contain a greater godhead or to house the splendours of this supramental force and knowledge.

This limitation is true only so long as man remains closed within the boundaries of the mental Maya. If he rises into the knowledge-self beyond the highest mental stature, if he becomes the knowledge-soul, the Spirit poised in gnosis, *vijñānamaya puruṣa*, and puts on the nature of its infinite truth and power, if he lives in the knowledge-sheath, the causal body as well as in these subtle mental interlinking vital and grosser physical sheaths or

bodies, then, but then only he would be able to draw down entirely into his terrestrial existence the fullness of the infinite spiritual consciousness; only then will he avail to raise his total being and even his whole manifested, embodied expressive nature into the spiritual kingdom. But this is difficult in the extreme; for the causal body opens itself readily to the consciousness and capacities of the spiritual planes and belongs in its nature to the higher hemisphere of existence, but it is either not developed at all in man or only as yet crudely developed and organised and veiled behind many intervening portals of the subliminal in us. It draws its stuff from the plane of the truth-knowledge and the plane of the infinite bliss and these pertain altogether to a still inaccessible higher hemisphere. Shedding upon this lower existence their truth and light and joy they are the source of all that we call spirituality and all that we call perfection. But this infiltration comes from behind thick coverings through which they arrive so tempered and weakened that they are entirely obscured in the materiality of our physical perceptions, grossly distorted and perverted in our vital impulses, perverted too though a little less grossly in our ideative seekings, minimised even in the comparative purity and intensity of the highest intuitive ranges of our mental nature. The supramental principle is secretly lodged in all existence. It is there even in the grossest materiality, it preserves and governs the lower worlds by its hidden power and law; but that power veils itself and that law works unseen through the shackled limitations and limping deformations of the lesser rule of our physical, vital, mental Nature. Yet its governing presence in the lowest forms assures us, because of the unity of all existence, that there is a possibility of their awakening, a possibility even of their perfect manifestation here in spite of every veil, in spite of all the mass of our apparent disabilities, in spite of the incapacity or unwillingness of our mind and life and body. And what is possible, must one day be, for that is the law of the omnipotent Spirit.

The character of these higher states of the soul and their greater worlds of spiritual Nature is necessarily difficult to seize. Even the Upanishads and the Veda only shadow them out by figures, hints and symbols. Yet it is necessary to attempt some account of their principles and practical effect so far as they can be grasped by the mind that stands on the border of the two hemispheres. The passage beyond that border would be the culmination, the completeness of the Yoga of self-transcendence by self-knowledge. The soul that aspires to perfection, draws back and upward, says the Upanishad, from the physical into the vital and from the vital into the mental Purusha,—from the mental into the knowledge-soul and from taht self of knowledge

into the bliss Purusha. This self of bliss is the conscious foundation of perfect Sachchidananda and to pass into it completes the soul's ascension. The mind therefore must try to give to itself some account of this decisive transformation of the embodied consciousness, this radiant transfiguration and self-exceeding of our ever aspiring nature. The description mind can arrive at, can never be adequate to the thing itself, but it may point at least to some indicative shadow of it or perhaps some half-luminous image.

SRI AUROBINDO

Be wide in me, O Varuna; be mighty in me, O Indra; O Sun, be very bright and luminous; O Moon, be full of charm and sweetness. Be fierce and terrible, O Rudra; be impetuous and swift, O Maruts; be strong and bold, O Aryama; be voluptuous and pleasurable, O Bhaga; be tender and kind and loving and passionate, O Mitra. Be bright and revealing, O Dawn; O Night, be solemn and pregnant. O Life, be full, ready and buoyant; O Death, lead my steps from mansion to mansion. Harmonise all these, O Brahmanaspati. Let me not be subject to these gods, O Kali.

SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CENTRE
THE PURSUIT OF PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

I

SRI Aurobindo was essentially a spiritual Master and his work too was primarily a spiritual one, viz., that of substantially raising the level of human consciousness. The method of it constitutes the technique of his Integral Yoga. But the cultural life of man is the best objective creation and representation of his inner consciousness as also an effective means of its growth and cultivation. Evidently, cultural life and its progressive advancement would belong to a system and method of life, which seeks a radical rise in the level of human consciousness. Integral Yoga is fully aware of this responsibility and, therefore, it includes a whole program of the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, in fact of all cultural life. In the present context we would consider Sri Aurobindo's plan and program of human knowledge alone, which, in fact, constitutes the reason and justification for founding the new university in Pondicherry.

Francis Bacon had in the 16th century given to the modern world a new outlook and program regarding the pursuit of knowledge and that had served to terminate the life and outlook of the middle ages and open doors to a new civilisation and system of life. Its last terms were that the senses and reason are the highest instruments of knowledge and that nature is the proper subject-matter of it. Further that man, in full trust and confidence in himself, could pursue knowledge and gain power. The outlook and program has in the course of four centuries, since then, completely justified itself. Man is today a confident master of nature and has evidently succeeded in creating, through such mastery, a new civilisation.

But with this success have appeared some new problems too. Though a master of the secrets of nature, man does not feel a master of his own life, neither in the individual nor in the mass. Sri Aurobindo sums up his reading of this baffling situation in these words: "Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity....

A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life."[1]

Thus, new faculties of cognition, affection and conation or a new quality of personality are now called for. His appreciation of reason is full and hearty. It is an indispensable instrument for the organisation and systematisation of external life. But its essential method is analysis and where 'wholes' of phenomena or the ultimate reality are concerned it proves inadequate. Our present mental life owns a great mass of analytical information and knowledge, which scientific research has so laboriously accumulated. But we have not the synthetic power and capacity to see and organise the different bodies of knowledge in their proper mutual relations or wholes and, therefore, we lack the sense and confidence of right direction and control over them. Hence culturally man stands today at the threshold of a new age, an age that must usher in capacities of "whole-knowing, whole-feeling and whole-willing", without losing in the least the advantages of a cultivated reason.

Philosophy, the chief representative and organiser of human knowledge, must therefore be a pursuit of Integral Truth and Reality. That means a direct awareness of them and with that must go the growth and development of the proper cognitive functions. Says Sri Aurobindo, "our way of knowing must be appropriate to that which is to be known."[2] To seek to apply the logic, which has arisen out of our necessity to deal with the finite objects of everyday life, to the Infinite is to make a serious philosophical error. By its basic assumptions it falsifies our conceptions of the Infinite. Kant's problem of the antinomies should be a permanent lesson to philosophy. It most effectively showed what reason was not competent to handle. Sri Aurobindo, therefore, propounds a logic of the Infinite and indicates the basic positions, which thought must respect in its attempts to conceive ultimate reality. In place of a rigid logic of sharply divided concepts, he outlines a comprehending and a plastic movement of thought, which is fully cognisant of the essential characteristics of infinite existence. A direct experience of Truth and no mere construction of It in ideas, inferential or hypothetical, is the clear and full aim of philosophical pursuit. A formulation of It in ideas and representation of the same in language are really to serve as means for evoking and aiding the same experience in others. Evidently ideas and

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II (2) Indian Edition, p. 1160-62.
[2] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II (1) Indian Edition, p. 43

language have to be plastic media for the expression of the philosophical truth. Just as our ideas under the trenchant logic of the finite have a tendency to become sharply divided, so also our words under the practical necessity of life have a tendency to become hard and rigid. In order that the philosophy of the future may be able to express the Absolute well enough, it will be necessary to evolve a more plastic and a more symbolic language. Says Sri Aurobindo, "a language has to be created which is at once intuitively metaphysical and revealingly poetical, admitting significant and living images as the vehicle of a close, suggestive and vivid indication."[1]

If one is able to agree to the above essentials of the philosophical pursuit, then a study of the "The Life Divine", the principal philosophical work of Sri Aurobindo, will become a wonderful revelation of the truths of life and existence. The varied problems of philosophy, which have persistently baffled solution, will progressively become clear and the delight of the philosophical reader will indeed be great. But the right approach is not easy to take. We are too strongly identified with a clear-cut logical language and too much used to an analytical treatment of the subject-matter. Divisions, classifications and separations of ideas, issues and treatments have become a habit with us. But the need now is, to learn to appreciate 'wholes', see things in their *ensemble*, move from totalities to bigger totalities. And if that motive can be acquired, "The Life Divine" wil present on almost every page a new whole, a new totality, a new reconciliation. It will show how the ontological, the epistemological and the axiological must move together, how the finite and the infinite must fulfil each other and how the theoretical and the practical are essentially one.

"The Life Divine" is primarily a work of metaphysics, even though the title might suggest it to be one of religious philosophy. Its essential issue is a reconciliation of the last contradiction of our experience, viz., that of matter and spirit. And this it does in a thorough-going manner in over 1000 pages and in doing so it discusses all major philosophical problems. Its exposition is inspired by a motive to know the last truth of things for its own sake as also by an interest to rise in actual experience to the enjoyment of that truth. And the conclusion of the work is, that existence is in essence the life of the supreme Divine and that man, who is apparently no more than a finite mind, is capable of participating in the full life of the Infinite.

[1] *The Life Divine*, Vol. II (1) Indian Edition, p. 43

II

This participation on the part of the human individual is essentially a matter of the growth of personality and is separately treated by Sr. Aurobindo in his work "The Synthesis of Yoga", which is as comprehensive an exposition of the subject as "The Life Divine" is of the problems of truth and existence. Yoga is "advanced psychology" and therefore this great work on his Integral Yoga is virtually an exposition of the psychology of integral personality and the conditions of its growth. The modern man is almost an unrecognisable phenomenon in the long procession of animal evolution. And yet, as Sri Aurobindo says, "The average human being even now is in his inward existence as crude and undeveloped as was the bygone primitive man in his outward life."[1] His psychological existence consists of "a small but clamorous company of desires, some imperative intellectual and aesthetic cravings, some tastes, a few ruling or prominent ideas amid a great current of unconnected or ill-connected and mostly trivial thoughts,"[2] which are held together in "some practical fashion, some tolerable disorderly order." This is the average material of our normal personality and in the end it all consists of varied adjustments and adaptations to our environment, physical and social. Ordinarily, this is taken to constitute our whole personality and all the labour of the psychologists is turned to discover and identify the different strands of its working, conscious and subconscious, mental and bodily, and formulate the laws of the psycho-physical behaviour of man

But is personality all a matter of external adaptations? Is its uniqueness merely a matter of a peculiar combination of the traits of personality? The yogic psychology, which relies on the method of deep introspection for the exploration of personality, affirms that our normal personality is just the surface phenomena of our existence. It is truly the "persona", the mask. Within and behind this mask there exists a luminous core of consciousness, which carries in itself the sense of a 'whole', which influences and holds together the external adaptations of surface personality and which lives and acts in its own right. This is the true person, the basis of uniqueness and true identity in each. This is the real spiritual fact of personality; the normal mental life, in relation to it, is derivative and instrumental, since the latter is essentially a means for adaptation to the environment.

[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Book I (American Edition), p. 28 [2] ibid, p. 28

But a deep and a wide inner exploration of personality also reveals some further ranges of consciousness with other qualities and characteristics. There is, for example, the one which Sri Aurobindo calls the subliminal. This is a range of consciousness, by means of which the individual finds himself in contact with the universal in nature. This enables us to get a direct knowledge of other minds. Besides this, there is a whole dimension of the Superconscious. The Subconscious is a dimension now very well known to psychology. It carries in its body our entire past, individual, racial and evolutional. But, since evolution is a continuing process, it must have a future too and the higher integrations, yet to be achieved, must be a present influence and force. The human consciousness is a superconscious fact and force to the animal consciousness and similarly there may be higher consciousnesses superconscious to the human. These are verifiable facts to yogic exploration.

Sri Aurobindo's special calling of life, one could say, was to discover and explore the superconscious and find out ways and means of making it dynamic in life. It is through it that a substantial raising of the standard of human consciousness can be achieved and that was exactly the fact that interested him most. In the exploration of the superconscious he has identified several successive ranges leading on to the supermind and has given a full characterisation of the power and action of each. These possess varying powers of transforming the normal personality and in yogic practice that demonstratively shows how sex and several other impulses of normal personality, considered inalienable to human nature, are in fact not so. This is bound to oblige a complete reorientation of current psychological knowledge.

This is a broad outline of the integral personality, which Sri Aurobindo's psychological system treats of and it will evidently be the duty of the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre to cultivate this knowledge and make it progressively available to the psychological world.

INDRA SEN

SRI AUROBINDOS MESSAGE TO PHILOSOPHY*

(Continued from the last issue)

If we look at this vast cosmic panorama with our limited apparatus of senses and mind we find that there is nothing but Inconscience at the beginning, and yet there is involved in it the infinite Universal Energy. The vast Inconscience, which has been termed "Chaos" by some religions gives rise to three main emergents or evolutes. The first emergent is Matter, Second is Life, the third is Mind of which man is the representative. This movement of universal energy, called evolution by some people, is not linear but emergent. When the first emergent, Matter, is formed there is the formulation of the indeterminate inconscient with an organised expression of universal material existence. This Matter has its own laws, its properties all of which have not yet been found by man. Mind trying to find out the constitution of Matter has found that at the base of this infinite Universe of Matter there are tiny electrical particles, called electrons. In fact, it is an ocean of electrical energy full of infinitesimal particles which by combination in different numbers, arrangement and movement create this vast material world stretching from this earth to the most distant nebula. Inertia, inconscience, insensibility are its characteristics at first sight; but on further investigation when mind tries to sound the possibilities of Matter, it is found that the powers of material energy are unlimited, that Matter has its own "infinitudes."

When Life emerges in the world of Matter it brings into expression quite different characteristics and potentialities into being. Matter grows by addition: Life grows by assimilation—a crystal of copper sulphate increases by addition of particles, life grows by assimilating elements of food and multiplying cells. Matter does not move by itself, a living being has movement possible to itself. The sensitiveness and response of Matter are, or at least seem to be, mechanical, but they are conscious attributes of Life. When Mind emerges it does not abandon what Universal Energy has already

* Address delivered on 29-12-1953 at the 28th Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress at Baroda.

created in Matter and Life. As life bases itself upon Matter, so Mind also comes into manifestation on the basis of Life and Matter. Man, the representative of this mental consciousness, has a physical body which is composed of material elements, he has also life energy and a nervous system to support the action of Life and added to this is the mental consciousness. This Mind has powers which are not possessed either by Life or by Matter. Thus, we have this vast cosmic movement with its foundations on the apparent Inconscient and three tiers mounting one upon another—not a linear movement of progression in a straight line, nor a constant ascent or gradient upwards but a climb like the steps of a ladder, or better still, the upward unfolding of a flower, petal by petal, each, revealing a new aspect, a new set of powers. Sri Aurobindo says that this process of emergence is not ended, that though man is at present the highest product, he is not the final one. Man is not the full-point, he is a transitional being. The process is still going on and has yet to go on. There is a level of consciousness beyond Mind which Sri Aurobindo calls the Super Mind which is potential to man. Man has to ascend to the Supermental which is the dynamic Divine Consciousness. Dr. Maitra has said: "the greatest fact about man is that he is more than man". That is to say, the present formulation of man cannot be taken as final and fixed, there are powers and capacities that have yet to be evolved. This aspect of Sri Aurobindo's vision opens out altogether a new prospect for man. It is also clear from Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of this process that this ascent to the higher level cannot be attained by a movement of Inconscient Nature. In man the process has become, or at least can become, self-conscious. It is man's conscious co-operation, his willing opening to this dynamic divine Reality which is the condition of its emergence here. It is true that the Reality above Mind which is dynamic is also exerting its pressure as it were so as to create here conditions for its descent. Sri Aurobindo says that the problems of men would be on their way to solution when man would succeed in opening to and bringing down in his life this higher Supermental Reality.

I know many people who might accept the rationale of the Supermind—the plane of consciousness beyond mind—would ask whether there is evidence of man wanting to attain it, or having attained it. Fortunately there is plenty of evidence of it not only in his religious efforts and in his philosophy but even in his cultural activities like poetry and fine arts. All religions found themselves on a faith in some super sensual, supraintellectual Reality as the origin and goal of this cosmic movement. The very aspiration for perfection,

in man from the beginning of history is the sign of his wanting to outgrow his present limitations and attain higher Reality. Besides, man has constantly contacted the levels of consciousness beyond Mind and he has activated in himself faculties from beyond the Mind. The highest poetry created by man is not the product of his mere reason, but that of Inspiration, Intuition or even Revelation. The working of these powers greater than those of Mind, very often, contradicts not only our reason but even the evidence of our senses.

When Shelley says about the Skylark: "Hail to thee! Blithe Spirit! Bird thou never wert"—he not only shocks the ornithologist but directly contradicts the sense data. And yet something within us tells us that the poet *is* right. The song that flows from the Skylark is the expression of a universal delight and harmony of which the skylark is only an instrument. The point is that man has been contacting these higher than intellectual faculties even in his cultural activities like poetry, literature and arts so that the ascent to a higher level is not altogether unknown to man.

The second contribution to philosophy is his explanation of origin of ignorance on the basis of an Omnipresent Reality. The basic difficulty of the schools of Monism in India has been how to reconcile the existence and persistence of Ignorance with that of the omnipresent Reality. All such efforts had to reduce the world of ignorance and imperfection to an unreality, non-existence, or an illusion, or at best had to grant it a reality of a secondary and an inferior order. Sri Aurobindo has shown that there is no logical necessity to reduce the world of Ignorance to an illusion if an Omnipresent Reality is its basis. Ignorance, falsehood, imperfection, suffering and evil are all explicable on the basis of a divine Omnipresent Reality. It is one of his most original contributions to philosophy, it is a feat of intellectuality which is not mere thought-weaving. Given this Omnipresent Reality the problem is not how it creates Ignorance but how it manages to become ignorant, or to assume Ignorance. How does the Reality that is all-knowledge, all-conscious, all-truth and all-good become ignorant, unconscious, even the opposite of its very self, falsehood and evil? All monistic Schools of philosophy had to admit an undivine principle—Maya, power of illusion, and thus introduce duality by the back door.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that what we experience as ignorance is not something that is fundamentally opposed to the divine Omnipresent Reality. The Omnipresent Reality at each point of its self-existence spontaneously self-determines its manifestation and puts forth an exclusive concentration

to support it. This it does for a double purpose: firstly, to create out of apparent Inconscient a conscious individual and secondly, to bring about an effectivity in its variations,—to bring into being a world of multiple self-manifestation. Thus, at each point of its self-existence there is a special, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, "an exclusive concentration" which acting spontaneously brings about an effective individualism and variation. In this process the totality of Omnipresent Reality is not destroyed, it is not cut up into parts, it is not fragmented, it is only withdrawn, it is put behind the exclusive concentration, and supports it from there. There is no question of the Omnipresent Reality becoming ignorant because being all-conscient and truth-conscient, and having determined its own manifestation by a spontaneous act of Will, It knows. It is only the 'ego', the deformation of the Divine Reality in man, that experiences Ignorance because it is cut off from the Infinite that supports from behind all exclusive concentration of itself on infinite points of self-manifestation. But even for the human being who feels the full burden of Ignorance, it must be admitted, it is not a permanent infliction, not an eternal element of his being. As man is a transitional being his Ignorance is only a stage which he has to outgrow. Man does succeed in his efforts in reducing his Ignorance even with his mental intelligence. It is, in fact, a goad to man to make an attempt to ascend to the higher Supramental consciousness where the original divine Will would be self-realised in consciousness and would thence manifest itself in life. Then the experience of Ignorance would be entirely eliminated being no longer necessary. This elimination of Ignorance has been achieved by some men in the past which proves that it is not an all-pervading and eternal element of this Universe. The seers of the Upanishadas and the Veda, persons like Jesus Christ have expressed the fact and the joy of this elimination of Ignorance in their utterances. The way to eliminate Ignorance is to reject the ego, which is the deformation of the true divine centre in us,—go behind into the "Cave of the Heart" as the Vedas and the Upanishads say, and find there the true Being, the Soul, the Spark of the Divinity in each one of us.

To give some idea of this exclusive concentration of the Omnipresent Reality one might resort to an analogy. It is well-known that man is not a simple, unitarian personality. It is also a matter of common experience that when one personality of man is active the rest of his personalities are put behind, withdrawn. The other personalities are not destroyed, or eliminated, or rendered unreal, they are all capable of being active when the occasion would require them. Thus, in case of a man one of whose personalities is a scientist com-

plete absorption in his subject,—his exclusive concentration,—would give him effectivity as a scientist. In fact, such an exclusive absorption is the necessary condition for perfection,—the more he forgets his other personalities the better for him as a scientist. Now, this experience of complete absorption would be felt as Ignorance if the man forgot, or became oblivious of, his other personalities, or his Central personality. He would thus feel not merely the effective absorption but the cramping walls of self-limitation. We also can see that the recovery of his total or integral self-consciousness is quite possible.

The exclusive Concentration of the Omnipresent Reality is called "Tapas" in the Upanishads. While explaining the creation of the Universe from the Infinite the Upanishad says "*Sa Tapas taptwa idam Sarvam asrijata*"—"He gathered his energies—resorting to Concentration—created all this." This Ignorance which is an act of Concentration of the Omnipresent Reality is not, as I said before, a permanent or an eternal element of this creation.

The third, and from the practical point of view perhaps the most important, contribution is Sri Aurobindo's view of psychology. There is no unanimity today about the subject matter and about method in the field of psychology. Modern attempts in that field have hardly taken cognisance of the truth that man is a transitional being and that his present psychological make-up has got to undergo change. We have no right to limit arbitrarily man's field of experience to his present state. Today man is living mainly in his waking, extroverted consciousness. But that is not the whole range of experience possible to him.

Sri Aurobindo has given us a more comprehensive view of man's psychology by envisaging the upward ascent of his consciousness, studying the functions of the new faculties and the nature of the new field of experience thus made available to man. He has shown that man as a product of evolution is largely influenced by the sub-conscient on which he stands. So, man has below his waking state the Subconscient, then there is the Conscient—"intra" and the "Circum"—conscient, and above his mental consciousness the Superconscient. His exposition of this whole range of human Consciousness containing the higher potentialities of the Super-Conscient is his original contribution to this Science.

Our President has pleaded for the application of scientific method to psychology. I admit there is a limited field for its application. But the main question is: Are methods of physical science applicable to and authentic in the field of psychology? Do we accept the idea that the Sensible is the only

Real? Personally, I believe that we cannot admit the scientific method throughout in psychology till we find out the weight of a "thought", calculate the energy of an "impulse" or passion and power of an "idea".

Sri Aurobindo has formulated the ladder of self-transcendence for man. The first step in his upward ascent beyond his mental Consciousness is what he calls the "Higher Mind". Man can remain on this higher level beyond his intellect and act from there in and on life. The stage above this Higher Mind is called the "Illumined Mind" by Sri Aurobindo. Beyond that is the Intuitive Consciousness attainable by man. As the Consciousness goes on ascending the "light" from the Superconscient is able to act more easily and so the darkness of Ignorance goes on thinning more and more till in the Overmind the transitional step between the Super-Conscient Light and mental Ignorance is reached. The Overmind is the global Cosmic Consciousness which universalises the individual while it operates in him, opening him not only to World-forces but also to the Will and knowledge of the Supermind, the dynamic Divine Consciousness. This whole range of the Super-Conscient has been investigated and the knowledge of its functioning made available to us by the great Master.

No less important is his Contribution to knowledge of the Sub-conscient that acts on man from below and his exposition of the psychic being, the true Spiritual spark of individuality in man, is unique. He has sounded the possibilities of Consciousness and given us a spiritual dynamics of Yoga.

In the realm of logic he has made two important suggestions. He has pointed out the limitations of reason as a faculty for grasping Truth. Secondly, he has pleaded that the logic of the Finite and the logic of the Infinite cannot be the same. While 2 plus 2 is equal to 4, Infinity plus Infinity is equal to Infinity. The inability to separate these two kinds of logic is responsible for a lot of confusion in the realm of metaphysics. The logic of the finite has been often extended to the Infinite.

As a corollary to the process of man's ascent to a higher level of Consciousness follows the process of Transformation of Nature. If the human being underwent the process of upward evolutionary ascent his present nature cannot remain unaffected, especially if the purpose of the ascent is not an escape or merging, but bringing down of the higher Truth into life. This transformation, Sri Aurobindo says, would not be a sudden transition or a miraculous change; it would be gradual and graded. It would be accomplished in three stages: (1) Psychicisation, (2) Spiritualisation, (3) Supramentalisation. These stages of transformation of Nature

would secure not only the elimination of Ignorance but the manifestation of the higher Truth which would lead to the fulfilment of man's integrated personality. It is this transformation of Nature beginning with the domination and lead of the Psychic Being that can result in the true and lasting integration of the human personality; for, the human personality in its ultimate foundation is Divine. The second stage widens out the integrated and partially divinised human nature into universality. The last stage transforms human nature into divine.

The Gita accepts this truth of transformation of Nature because it admits Nature not only as claimant for spiritual freedom but perfection. It admits the possibility of manifestation of divine Nature. It speaks of human greatness of Nature in leaders of men, and of the Vibhuti as the manifestation of the higher Nature in humanity. The Avatar manifests divine Nature in humanity showing the divine potentiality of man.

A necessity is felt for philosphy for humanity today. This vast, all embracing philosophy, this grand synthesis of human knowledge given to us by Sri Aurobindo offers the most satisfying basis for such a philosophy. There is nothing regional about it, it is free from cramping limitations of past traditions, it contains the living Truth of all great philosophies and religions—it is the one vision that holds out hope for the future of man.

Man in his recent progress has sounded the possibilities of Matter—but the untold possibilities of Life and Mind are yet to be tapped. But the call of Sri Aurobindo is for sounding the potentialities of man's Consciousness beyond Mind. It is a call for man not to remain confined to and content with his present state but to rise to the goal of his march Beyond, —to realise his divine destiny. That Beyond is not an extra-cosmic or an aloof Reality, but a dynamic Truth, one intimately related to the Soul of man,—to his individual and Collective Consciousness. If I may be permitted to put it in the traditional language that Reality far from being an incommunicable Absolute is a dynamic Divinity. It is Mother—Power—, the *Mātri-Shakti*, guarding her Creation with all her maternal love and solicitude. It is for man to want, to aspire to, that Divine Reality the Supreme Mother. It is SHE that would help him to transform his Nature and bring down here on earth the Kingdom of God.

In the present world-context, it will be seen that, this philosophy gives the only hope. By his scientific advance man has created such a gigantic structure of economic-centric life,—individual and Collective—that he is not able to cope with it with his limited intellectual powers. Man has got

hold of a material Energy which is universal but man who uses it is a puny and small ego, there is nothing universal about him.

The alternative solution proposed by thinkers like Bertrand Russell seems very unconvincing, apart from the fact that he does not tell us how the change he desires in man is to be effected. In his broadcasts from London, titled "Living in an atomic age" Russell has tried to trace man's growth and analysed the human problem into three stages: Man versus Nature (2) Man's Struggle with Man, and (3) Man torn and divided in his own being by a sense of Sin. He proposes that if man could adjust his mind to the new scientific advance of the atomic age he would be able to solve his problems. But the diagnosis is not quite correct. His first assertion that Man and Nature have been always and altogether antagonistic is not quite true. Nature offers resistance —you may say even opposition—to man but She does not do it to crush and destroy man. It is Nature in fact that supports man. The air we breathe and the nourishment we assimilate are provided by Nature: Tagore in his book *Sādhana* has dwelt upon this aspect and shown that Nature is helpful and beneficent. In fact, Nature is like a bride that has to be won. It is She who lays bare before man—the Purusha—her inexhaustible riches and it is Nature that arms man to conquer her.

About the third point in his analysis i.e. Man divided within himself by sense of sin—Russell's statement is incomprehensible. He says that the self-division of man, created by the infliction of the sense of Sin, is the cause of his conflicts. Man projects this sense of Sin on other men. In man a portion of himself is Sinful but the enemy is entirely made of Sin. This reading of Russell is entirely at variance with facts of experience. Not a single English or German soldier thought that the whole of his enemy is made of Sin. And even assuming that Russell's remedy may be worth trying, it amounts to effecting a change in man's psychology. That is to say, the problem of man is man,—it is a psychological problem. The only two remedies found out by man today are Democracy and Economic Reconstruction. Even they cannot succeed unless there is psychological change. It is not mere adjustment and compromise that will solve man's problem. It is a radical change that is required. That change is the change envisaged by Sri Aurobindo, as the Supramental Ascent which can render possible the descent of the Truth-Consciousness into Life. Inadequacy of Mind as the instrument of this Change has been pointed out by many philosophers and even from your own Congress Prof. Chubb and Dr. Indra Sen have contributed papers to show the limitations of Mind and the existence of other than mental content

in mental constructions.

I may, in conclusion, try to formulate Sri Aurobindo's message to philosophy, as far as possible, in his own inimitable words from his great epic. I will speak the language of poetry which is the inspired word of wisdom—and after all poetry, philosophy, religion and art, are sister activities:

O Philosophy, Goddess of Light,
Thou who art the embodiment of love of Wisdom,

do not say to man:

"This is the end there is no beyond."

for, all organised thought is

"Ordered knowledge of apparent things."

Remember that

"We are not left alone in a closed scheme
Between a driving Inconscient force
And an incommunicable Absolute."

If thou art assailed by doubt think:

"Is the Sun a Dream because there is Night?"

Also remember that

"Inconscient has its sealed infinitudes"

that,

"Our Minds are starters in the race to God".

This vast Cosmic movement is

"the pilgrimage of Nature to the Unknown."

Always remember that:

"Truth is wider, greater than her forms
A thousand icons they have made of her
But She remains herself—and infinite."

The human being is "a Way-lost God"

O Philosopher:

"Make thy daily life a pilgrimage"

for, at present man's

"little 'I' has swallowed the whole world. His ego has stretched into infinity."

Thy real task is not to construct a system of thought: thy real work is:

"To build a new world, a new heaven." However attractive the escape, remember that "Escape is not the Solution.":

"A greater power must come, a larger Light",
One of thy great tasks is to establish "a deep
Concordat between Truth and Life."

Philosophy, to be living, must not merely be a profession of the intellect, affirmation of the Mind. It is a flame of the Soul, an unquenchable flame.

O Philosophy: "Because thou art, the Soul draws near to God
Because thou art, love grows in spite of hate,
And knowledge walks unslain in pit of Night"

"But not by showering heaven's golden rain
Upon the intellect's hard and rocky soil
Can the true Paradise flower on earthly ground."

Can you, O Goddess of Light! O Philosophy!
See that "here on earth a Camp of God is pitched in human time" ?
O Philosophy, it is thy privilege
"To seize the Absolute in Shapes that pass,
To feel the Eternal's touch in time-made things,
This is the Law of all perfection here."

A. B. Purani

THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE

Part II

WE have seen that the proper perspective of Indian culture is the spiritual and that it can be developed only by a regular self-discipline and self-transcendence. If somebody thinks that, because he is an Indian and intellectually enlightened, he can feel the pulse of the national spirit and touch the core of its culture, he is sadly mistaken. That would have perhaps been possible two or three hundred years ago,but it is not possible today when the outlook of man all the world over has undergone such a considerable change under the pervading influence of Materialism and his higher values have foundered on the shoals of an almost exclusive material preoccupation. Barring a few cases of exceptional insight or intuition, there is a general dead level of mental incomprehension and misinterpretation of the essence of Indian culture. Even where there is an attitude of respect and a will to appreciate, the right approach is lacking and the right preparation and aptitude, adhikara, to understand; and that cripples many an enthusiastic endeavour. Had Indian culture been a mental culture like that of the Greeks or a purely materialistic culture like the one in which we live at present, a sympathetic mental approach would have been quite adequate and led to a more or less correct evaluation. But Indian culture being essentially spiritual, the spiritual perspective, born of a spiritual aspiration and intuition, can alone yield the right results. We must learn, then, to dive deep into Indian culture, if we really want to see the treasures it contains and bring them out to enrich and illuminate our life.

What do we see when we evolve the right perspective? What is the new vision that, as Sardar Panikkar reminds us, is rising before us? What is the new civilisation that India is developing and the new way of life to which she is beckoning humanity? An influential group of sociologists with Sorokin at its head is dreaming of a reconstruction of humanity and declaring that the key to this reconstruction lies in the superconscient. But who will explore the superconscient and discover the key? Certainly not Western humanity which, at its present mental level of evolution, seems to have

exhausted all its inner resources and gone dismally bankrupt. The ascent of its mind has been arrested and its mental energies, its intellect, its imagination are all being increasingly prostituted to the service of its desire-soul which seeks the satisfaction of its selfish ambitions, its blind appetites and animal instincts. If the key to the reconstruction of humanity lies in the superconscient, then it is evident that the superconscient has to be attained and explored; and that is precisely the function of a spiritual culture. A growth and expansion of spiritual culture is the dire need of the moment, and what other country than India can meet that need? It is she alone that can discover the key and lead mankind to a new age of divine living. Man feels frustrated and forlorn in the howling wilderness of a soulless mechanistic civilisation in which his materialism has landed him.

The vision that is rising before India is the vision of a divine living, a spiritual way of life for humanity. But what is divine living? Most of us seem to have a very vague and confused notion of it. It would, therefore, be worth our while to consider it and try to form a clear and definite conception of it, if possible. But before we do that, it would be conducive to the formation of that conception to indicate the nature of the spiritual culture that would lead to the divine living.

There are two outstanding characteristics of the spirituality that is rising n India today. The first is its vigorous dynamism and its uncompromising epudiation of the ascetic or monastic traditions of the past. The days of the anchorite and the escapist have gone, and with them the glorification of the quietistic tendency and the superior contempt for the salutary labours of life. A greater knowledge of the significance of the human birth and God's intention in the material world is dawning upon human consciousness. We are learning to look upon the world as a manifested form of the universal Brahman[1] and have thrown overboard the dispiriting, anti-vitalistic doctrine of Maya or illusion. Life is real, life is eternal, and its goal is neither the gaping Nihil nor the impersonal, impassive Immutable. The real, the ultimate goal of life is the Divine, the Divine here and now as much as the Divine beyond; and of all beings in the universe, it is man alone who has the privilege of realising and manifesting Him here, on this earth. Not escape from this life, but a complete divinisation of it is, therefore, the work man has been set here to accomplish. Founded upon this illumined teleology of the world and human life, the renascent spirituality in India is rising with a mighty

[1] *Brahmaivedam Vishvamidam Varishtham.*

dynamism, a colossal creative force, to actualise the truths of its awakening vision. It bids fair to permeate all life, embrace all its aspects and stimulate and quicken all its dynamic energies. It will leave no part of human life untouched, untransformed and unfulfilled.

The second characteristic of the new spirituality is that it has been itself baptised in the fire of the supreme Truth-Consciousness. The source of its surging dynamism is not religious humanism or philanthropy, which is an ethical, that is to say, mental motive, but the supreme Will of the Divine as it is manifest in its original purity in the creative Vijnana. Traditional spirituality, except, of course, the most ascetic and other-worldly type, has been spiritual in its depths, but mostly ethical in its life-expression. The representatives of this spirituality have enjoyed union and communion with the Divine or with the Self or Atman in their inmost consciousness and being, but in their dealings with the world they have allowed themselves to be guided by their exalted sattwic feelings of compassion, kindness, sympathy, benevolence etc. They have engaged in beneficent activities of many kinds, which have a considerable purifying influence and serve as inspiring examples of the humanitarian or altruistic attitude. But if they take a detached and penetrating view of these activities, they will see that they do not proceed direct from the centre of their consciousness, but are a mental translation of their inner soul-state. They are, at their best, a spontaneous play of their sattwic nature, and have usually a twofold purpose behind them: relief and succour to suffering humanity and its guidance on the way to liberation (mukti). There is no intention in these activities to discover and fulfil the divine Will in the world. This distinction between the works directed by the divine Will and those done by the sattwic mind of man has to be clearly seized if we want to understand the difference between the spirituality of yesterday and the dynamic spirituality that is rising in India today. Religious humanism can help and heal to a certain extent, but it cannot transform human nature into divine nature and human life into divine life, for it has neither the knowledge nor the power to do it. It restricts its scope of service by setting the goal of life beyond life and pointing to the consummation of its labour in some remote Otherwhere. If it has imbibed something of the modern spirit of social service, it uses it, not in the spiritual, but in the mental way and makes a queer amalgam of Western humanism and spiritual ministrations. But its call is invariably for the Beyond, away from Matter to the peace and silence of the Spirit.

But the fulfilment of the material life does not lie in its progressive self-

bolition in the supracosmic Light, but in its increasing incorporation and evelation of that Light. Matter has as much right to union with the Divine s our soul, and if the modern age has any mission to accomplish, it is the nission of the perfection and fulfilment of the entire life of man in the Divine. The sanctity and divine significance of life are becoming clearer to he consciousness of the elite of mankind and the present chaotic state f society is giving an additional edge to their inner aspiration. It is felt more nd more that the soul of man has come down into the material world not to wake to its error and beat a precipitate retreat, but to fulfil the Will of God o self-manifestation in the conditions of the material existence. Born soldiers f the Light, the pioneers of the new spirituality are averse to flight from the attle-field of the world and totally indifferent to their personal salvation. They are vowed to bridge the gulf between the life of man and the Light of God, and transform the former into a channel of the latter. Their work is ot humanitarian or philanthropic service of man, as it is commonly conceived by the human mind, but the fulfilment of the Will of God and the nanifestation of His Light and Love in the material world. Their activities pring not from sattwic human feelings, but from their conscious union vith God, from the embrace of their will with the divine Will; and they do ot point to any fulfilment beyond, but to a divine perfection here and now, *haiva*. The world exists, according to them, as a manifold self-expression f Sachchidananda, and not as a spring-board for an irrevocable plunge nto the featureless Unknown.

This dynamic spirituality will include in its scope all the activities of life, ultural, intellectual, political, economic, commercial, industrial etc., not ertainly in their present impure and imperfect forms and not for their own ake, but as transformed media for the outpouring of the divine plenitude. t will temper them in its own fire and forge them anew, so that they may ecome transparent outlets for the creative energies of the Divine in man. The primary aim of this revolutionary spirituality will be the realisation of he integral Divine, the omnipresent Reality, and the ultimate aim the manifestation of that Reality in all the walks and aspects of human life.

It might appear to many that this new ideal was only a spiritualisation of he Western gospel of pragmatism; but a deeper vision would reveal that pragmatism or activism would only be an outward expression of the new spirituality and not its essence or base. The base of this spirituality will be, s I have already suggested, a constant and integral union with the divine Reality, and its self-expression in the works of human life will be a perennial

outpouring of the glory and ecstasy of that union. Action will surge out of a supreme inner silence and move in the unfaltering steps of the supreme Light. Not the ideas of the human mind, however exalted they may be, but the Will of the Divine will be the single source of all our action.

The new spirituality may also appear at first sight to be conterminous with the karmayoga of the Gita, but, here again, a maturer vision will reveal that the Gita's gospel of works, as it is currently understood, can be only the starting point or the initial stage of its growth and development, but not its perfect flowering. Disinterestedness, which is an indispensable condition of the karmayoga of the Gita, will eventually pass into a divine interest,—the interest which the Divine feels in His own works in the world. Disinterestedness is a state of consciousness in which all egoistic individual interests have ceased; it is a negative state of the soul's freedom from all desires and preferences. But the Divine is not only disinterested—He has an inexhaustible divine interest in all His works, an eternal Will to delight which is at the origin of creation. The followers of the new spirituality will also feel the same divine interest in all the activities of life. Their union with the Divine being integral and inviolable, they will participate in His unebbing delight in all movements of the world.

The modern concepts of socialism, democracy, communism, syndicalism, will pale into insignificance before the ideal of spiritual liberty, equality and fraternity to be realised by mankind in the future. It is the Spirit alone that is one in all and imperishable; the other components of our being—our bodies, lives and minds—are separate from those of others and perishable. If unity is to be established in human society—it seems to be the most insistent demand of the modern age, in spite of all clashes and conflicts that disfigure it—it must radiate from the depths of our being outwards. It has first to be realised where it is eternally present, in our inmost spirit, and then to be infused into our mutable personality. The examples of the spiritual leaders like the Buddha and the Christ are enough to prove that it was not any socialistic or communistic principles of outer living that had made them equal to all men and selfless benefactors of humanity, but the love of their heart, the limitless love born of divine realisation, of the realisation of the essential oneness of all existence. Their conduct was not regulated by any political, social or ethical rules, but was only a spontaneous outflowering of their soul's plenitude, a tranquil and beatific expression of their union with the Infinite and Eternal. 'No ideology of the modern times, even if fully put into practice, can bring about the liberty and the equality, let

alone fraternity, so longed-for by the progressive mind of humanity. It is time we awoke to the truth that on the material plane of life, liberty and equality are contradictory concepts. We see it already exemplified in the growing tendency of egalitarianism to immolate individual liberty at the altar of a mechanically devised economic equality. But if the individual is denied his legitimate freedom, he strives to recover it in a devious and aggressive way under cover of a socialistic or egalitarian regime—and that is totalitarianism, dictatorship in an apparent set-up of democracy. Where individual liberty is suppressed for the sake of equality, equality tends to harden into a soulless uniformity, a sterile regimentation of the collective life steam-rollered into a superficial sameness. Neither liberty nor equality nor fraternity can be established in human society till the essential unity of existence is realised in the Self or Spirit that is one in all.

If, then, the ideals of the modern age are to be realised at all—their persistence in the teeth of a desperate opposition is a proof of their invincible vitality—it can be done only by means of a thorough-going, comprehensive, dynamic spiritual culture. A collective life, even as any individual spiritual life, lived in God, in the supreme Truth and Reality of all existence, and moved by the Will of God, will be a life of natural liberty, equality and, not only fraternity, but of love and inner identity. The Will of the Supreme Truth, of which our desires are but scattered splinters, darkened and distorted in our ignorance, will express itself, unhindered and undeflected, in the multiplying diversities of life; for, this Will in the world is not for self-extinction, but for a rich and manifold self-fulfilment. Already in India such a comprehensive, dynamic spirituality is rearing itself upon an extension of the ancient base of the Vedic culture, which aimed at the conquest and revelation of immortality in human life.[1] The ancient roots are there ever green with an indestructible vitality, and given the right care and the proper season, will sprout and grow into a massive tree of unprecedented splendour.

The divine living to which the resurgent spirituality will lead humanity will be the living of the unveiled Divine in transformed men. It will be the supreme Truth-Consciousness initiating, directing and consummating the working of human nature. Peace, harmony, a happy concordance of thoughts

[1] ...Follow the shining thread spun out across the mid-world, protect the luminous paths built by the thought; weave an inviolate work, become the human being, create the divine race...Seers of truth are you, sharpen the shining spears with which you cut the way to that which is immortal; knowers of the secret planes, form them, the steps by which the gods attained to immortality.—Rig Veda

and ideas, a spontaneous play of universal sympathy and goodwill and a helpful coordination of the creative efforts of mankind, will be some of the natural results of the divine life. This life will grow and spread out from within, washing away the greed, the lust for power, the selfish ambitions, the hatred and envy which characterise the animal-human life we live today. In commerce, in industry, in the very fields of life where the rapacious instincts of men clash and collide, there will be a smooth mutuality and interchange welling out of the consciousness of universal unity and making for a peaceful progress towards a greater and greater richness of a diversified existence. "A spiritualised society would live like its spiritual individuals, not in the ego, but in the Spirit, not as the collective ego, but as the collective soul. This freedom from the egoistic standpoint would be the first and most prominent characteristic. But the elimination of egoism would not be brought about, as it is now proposed to bring it about, by persuading or forcing the individual to immolate his personal will and aspirations and his precious and hard-won individuality to the collective will, aims and egoism of the society, driving him like a victim of ancient sacrifice to slay his soul on the altar of that huge and shapeless idol. For that would be only the sacrifice of the smaller to the larger egoism, larger only in bulk not necessarily greater in quality or wider or nobler....It is said in the old Indian writings that while in the second age, the age of Power, Vishnu descends in the King, and in the third, the age of balance, as the legislator or codifier, in the age of the Truth he descends as Yajna, that is to say, as the Master of works manifest in the heart of His creatures. It is this kingdom of God within, the result of finding of God not in a distant heaven but within ourselves, of which the state of society in an age of the Truth spiritual age, would be the result and the external figure.

"Therefore a society which was even initially spiritualised, would make the revealing and finding of the divine Self in man the whole first aim of all its activities, its education, its knowledge, its science, its ethics, its arts its economical and political structure.... It would pursue physical and psychical science not in order merely to know the world and Nature in her processes and to use them for material human ends, but to know through and in and under and over all things the Divine in the world and the ways of the Spirit in its masks and behind them....It would make it the aim of Art not merely to present images of the subjective and objective world, but to see them with the significant and creative vision that goes behind their papearances and to reveal the Truth and Beauty of which things visible

to us and invisible are the forms, the masks or the symbols and significan figures....In its politics...it would regard the peoples as group souls meant like the individual to grow according to their own nature and by that growth to help each other, to help the whole race in the one common work of humanity. And that work would be to find the divine Self in the individual and the collectivity and to realise spiritually, mentally, vitally, materially its greatest, largest, richest and deepest possibilities in the inner life of all and their outer action and nature."[1]

This all-embracing, dynamic spirituality, enabling men to live in the eternal Truth and Reality of their existence, is the vision that is rising before us in India today. India has survived the ravages of Time and many a brutal assault of circumstances only to bring to humanity this inspiring message of the divine life on earth. This is, as Mr. Munshi would say, India's mission in history. Her greatest contribution to human culture is, not the gospel of personal salvation, but a definite path, a synthetic, integral Yoga, leading to a divine perfection and fulfilment of mankind on earth. She will reveal God in man and in his culture and civilisation. She will flood human society with God's Light and refound it on God's peace and harmony. She will raise man from his blundering mind into the solar splendour of the Truth-Consciousness and fulfil his evolutionary destiny. It is for this that India has lived and laboured through the centuries, in the light and in the night. She has lived for God in man.

RISHABHCHAND.

[1] *The Human Cycle* by Sri Aurobindo

THE LIFE DIVINE

(A Synopsis—Continued from the last issue)

CHAPTER VI

Man In The Universe

The progressive emergence of a luminous Reality in the world-existence itself is the graded steps envisaged by the awakening consciousness in man.

The ancient Truth of the infinite Bliss-Existence-Consciousness (Sachchidananda) the same everywhere,—within, behind and beyond all phenomena,—only reveals itself, since it is involved in the world, to an evolving individual consciousness opening to that Truth.

Vedanta is a knowledge founded on the realisation of Sachchidananda—the threefold Reality of the Supreme. It is the ancient truth of the eternal Trinity, the Three in One. While the concept of the duality merely opens us to the plurality or universal reality, the triple concept of the supreme Oneness opens us to the three-fold relation of the individual, the universe and the transcendent; and on this relation man's earthly existence hinges.

The universe and the individual are the two essential appearances into which the supreme and transcendent Reality has descended; and this movement was a progressive self-concealing. The discovery of the Supreme by the individual is the ascent, by the same path, but by a progressive revelation or unveiling of that which had become involved. Above the terms of Life and Mind man may thus discover Supermind,—the key to the cosmic harmony.

The universe is a diffusion of the divine All in infinite Space and Time, while the individual is its concentration within the limits of Space and Time. It is only through the ascent in consciousness of the concentrated centres (of individuals) that the extensive plurality of the universe can manifest the original Oneness. But by this ascent the individual does not thereby lose his true individuality.

Man, of all terrestrial beings, has become conscious of the life-energy, and likewise through a progressive self-knowledge may become fully conscious of mind-energy, and hence of that which is beyond mind.

Man's first glimpses of that higher Reality beyond his mentality reveal to him his own limitation, when he is faced with the vastness of the Beyond; and he feels the division in his own existence and in himself. The limitation is in fact the realisation—not of any permanent separation or division in Reality itself—but the condition of man's present incomplete state of being. And hence the realisation of the true Wholeness into which he has to grow comes to him.

It is a process of transmutation (not of purgation) by which Heaven and Earth and the bliss of the Supreme can be joined in the earthly consciousness. The key to the universal unity is the essential Oneness of Reality; and the discovery of this truth lies within man himself.

CHAPTER VII

The Ego and the Dualities

By basing our initial conception of Reality on the truth of the triple Nature of the Divine (Sachchidananda) we overcome the impasse of that duality which has hypnotised man's thought and kept him bound to either an exclusive onesidedness, or a wavering uncertainty.

All is one Reality, but it is only by overcoming the Ignorance or Unknowing, by the ascent through mind, that man can attain to that Truth. The fact that man is conscious of the Ignorance and at the same time glimpses a higher Knowledge, only indicates his own divided being and incompleteness. This condition of division or duality has been symbolised in the 'fall of man', which represents his separation from the divine Oneness, and hence his exclusive experience of the dualities of the world Ignorance. The discovery of the triple relation of the Divine, through man's transcendence of the Ignorance, is a truth that is valid not only in the transcendent experience itself, but also in the universality and above all in the individual; and hence it is a decisive step in man's advance.

Man is obliged to begin from the individual experience, and strive to realise the universal totality beyond his present limited consciousness. The necessary basis of enlargement of consciousness is man's present mentality, his dualistic sense-mind; for the sense-mind is man's link with the realities of the earth-life, which have to be met as equally as the realities beyond. Thus it is important in shifting our egoistic outlook to that of the Divine

Consciousness, that we have the adequate support of a reasoned and effective Knowledge, in which the egoistic life will rediscover all its values transformed and corrected.

First we have to see the truth that life itself is not bound to our present egoistic evaluations. For man to see that higher truth, he has to grow towards it in mental perception, and thus awaken latent faculties of higher consciousness in himself.

In our pursuit of knowledge (by the reasoning process of discovering truth through the elimination of error), many questions, doubts and uncertainties assail the mind, and have to be met. Science is in fact moving in this path of eliminating error, but yet the true *cause* of things escapes man's grasp.

The true cause and hence the true root-knowledge lies in the Reality that the Supreme (the Absolute or Brahman) is the one universal and essential fact, and that its Nature is a three-fold Reality (Sachchidananda). From this Divine-centred relation we can build a new foundation of knowledge, based on the truth that life itself is centred in an immortal existence; that emotion has its origin in a self-existent delight in being; that thought is centred in an all-pervading truth; and that all activity is rooted in a self-effecting good.

All this play and movement of the universe is embodied in a multiplicity of forms, or individual centres, from which the ego—a self-limitation of consciousness—has arisen. But the ego is a transitory formation, an intermediate representation of something beyond itself,—that is, the divine Conscious Being.

Through a progressive evolution the limited ego can eventually become transformed into a conscious centre of the divine unity.

CHAPTER VIII

The Methods Of Vedantic Knowledge

The senses give us knowledge only of the physical world. To extend the boundaries of knowledge we have to extend the instruments of knowledge, the first of which is pure Reason.

Reason may be either mixed or pure. Its action is mixed when it depends wholly on the evidence of the senses. Its pure action takes sensible experience only as a starting-point in order to arrive at concepts that stand behind or even beyond appearances.

Pure reason has to correct the errors of the sense-mind. By this path we reach from physical to metaphysical knowledge. But metaphysical knowledge is not sufficient in itself, unless it can become an actual experience that has entered into man's psychological nature.

The senses are merely organs of the sense-mind. And the sense-mind itself can act without the instrumentality of the organs of sense. This pure action of the sense-mind gives us a direct or subjective perception, which is the basis of a knowledge by identity.

Perception by the physical organs of sense is indirect only so long as the ego upholds the limitation and the separation of experience into subjective and objective. But because the ego-limitation is not fixed, we can surpass this separation and reach the true intuitive knowledge. First we have to see the potentiality of mind itself as an instrument of knowledge apart from the physical instruments.

Thus the action of the senses is merely a means—a starting-point—through which the mind can establish contact; for it is ultimately the mind that perceives. The mind can therefore be trained to use inner senses of perception, and to perceive the thoughts or feelings of others without aid from their utterance, gesture, or action (as in telepathy). This, however, only widens our field but does not yet lead us to the truth beyond the sense.

The Vedantic solution states that knowledge should be based on Intuition, which is an extension of knowledge by identity, through self-awareness. Through a widening of the individual self one attains the knowledge of the All-Self. By this means we can reach beyond mind and the reason, which are intermediary stages in the ascent of Consciousness.

We see that Intuition, working as instinct, is inherent though concealed in Life, and it is also the true basis of human thought. But Intuition only manifests its true nature in the superconscient where Light is the law. Here mind and reason then act as true intermediaries, liberating knowledge out of its concealed state and leading it towards its true self-luminous manifestation.

The great truths of Vedanta, based on this intuitional approach to knowledge, may be summarised as follows:

In the universe the ultimate Reality is Brahman, perceived as pure, indefinable, infinite Existence,—that is, the All-Existent. This is an experience beyond sense-perception, which comes to us as a ray or luminous intimation through intuition. These brilliant messages are the beginnings of man's higher knowledge.

The three great declarations of the Upanishads (I am He; Thou art That;

and All this is the Brahman), condenses this highest experience of Reality. The first indicates the experience of the individual identity with the Supreme; the second the identity with the Supreme through the multiplicity; and the third expresses the realisation of the Allness of the Supreme.

Pure reason as an established faculty in man, if it can be guided by intuitive thought, can raise man's faculties to that higher consciousness of which the early revelations of the mystics and sages were but an opening, a message from the superconscient, as well as a ladder by which man is able to climb through his own evolutionary progression, to bring the Divine into this earthly life.

CHAPTER IX

The Pure Existent

When we look upon the world dispassionately, apart from our egoistic preoccupation, we perceive a boundless Energy in limitless Space and eternal Time.

Although we see that this infinite existence has its own gigantic aims and formidable standards against the pettiness of our own, yet at the same time we are shown (and Science confirms) that this mighty Energy is the equal and impartial Mother of existence. But when we speak of equal here we do not mean a weighed quantity, or an assessed and uniform quality, as our relative intellect dictates.

If we look beyond the intellect, and are guided by an intuitive knowledge by identity, we shall see that the Consciousness of this infinite Energy is other than our mental consciousness. It is indivisible and gives, not an equal part of itself, but its whole self at one and the same time to the largest agglomeration as well as to the minutest particle. All is Brahman, or the Absolute, and each thing is That in essence.

But though the infinite Energy is the same in all, the form and movement and result of its force, vary infinitely in each.

The difficulty of our seeing this infinite differentiation of the indivisible One, has sprung from an original ignorance that is rooted in our own egocentric view of the world. Our present knowledge of the world is in fact based on this original error.

First we have to recognise that the appearances we see around us are

only a partial movement of this infinite movement. Thus we have to know this infinite and omnipotent Energy as the central factor.

But to know the movement of the Energy we have to know its centre, the immutable Stability which is the pure Existence and Origin of all movement; since the movement itself gives us no clue regarding its inexhaustible source.

The difficulty for mental perception is to see both Time and Space, as well as Timelessness and Spacelessness together, as real aspects of the Absolute. To overcome this difficulty we have to see the infinite and indefinable Absolute as only partly knowable by us. For there is a vast field that is as yet unknowable, which seems to oppose and even contradict our phenomenal existence.

All that vast Beyond which is as yet Transcendent to us surpasses the bounds of conceptual language. We can only call it the ineffable and the immutable.

The emergence of movement from the Immutable is an eternal phenomenon. But immersed in the flow of Time we can only perceive this movement—following the dictates of our reason—as a cycle, a recurrent beginning, middle, and end. Or if we follow an inner intuitive experience we perceive an eternity of successive duration. We then have the false opposition between an experience resting on pure reason and that following an intuition that has fixed itself solely on the becoming as the whole reality.

The conflict is only resolved by detaching ourselves from the movement —that is, discovering that in ourselves which is not involved in the becoming; and thereby we experience the reality of the pure existence, the absolute Stability.

This deeper experience of intuition confirms the higher experience of pure Reason; namely, that there are two fundamental facts, that of pure existence and that of world-existence, a fact of Being, and a fact of Becoming, where Being is the pure Existent and Becoming the Conscious Force.

CHAPTER X

Conscious Force

The phenomenal existence arising out of the immutable Stillness resolves itself in the universe into a Force, or movement of energy, that manifests itself in forms and grades of substance.

Of these grades Matter is the most easily intelligible to our mental consciousness. The ancient view considered Matter in its five elementary states. These are: pure space, which we recognise through sound; the aerial state, which we recognise by touch; light and heat, which are apparent to us through sight, as well as touch; the liquid state, which is apparent to us through taste; and finally the solid state, which is apparent to us through smell, and the other senses.

But this ancient theory did not explain how the universal vibrations of Force could give rise to conscious sensations in us. The old theory (of the Sankhyas), only stated that behind these five material elements were two non-material principles, the cosmic principle of Force (Mahat) and the principle of Ego-formation (Ahankara). These two principles (together with the principle of intelligence) only become active through the intermediary of a Conscious-Soul. This latter, though itself inactive, reflects its consciousness into these principles of Force, division and intelligence, which thence become active principles.

One fundamental fact, on which both the old theories and modern science agree, is that Nature is a Force,—a formative movement of energies. With this as our fundamental standpoint we have to see further that this Force is yet inherent and ever-persent in the universal origin of the all things, the immutable stability. For out of the immutable Existence the phenomenal worlds have issued as a continuous chain or recurrent cycle.

This, however, only explains the how of the process, but does not explain the unanswered why. Why should the concentrated, self-existent Force—in its Origin—diffuse itself in an infinite variation and extensivity? We can only answer this if we accept Existence itself as Conscious Being.

Here it is necessary to note what we mean by Consciousness. This is not the mental waking consciousness of the individual, but a vaster subliminal consciousness beyond the instrumentality of body and sense.

From this point of view we begin to see that consciousness has itself many grades, extending from the inert subconsciousness in matter and the lower forms of life, to the Conscious Soul (or Purusha) in the individual being, that never sleeps.

A distinction should be noted between the subconsciousness and the subliminal consciousness. The subconscious is that which is as yet involved, and has not yet opened in the evolutionary ascent. The subliminal belongs to a vaster universal range of consciousness, beyond the individual though

connected with him, by which man can raise himself above his present mentality.

The existence of different grades of consciousness is apparent to us in our own physical life. Thus in our own body we know that a vital consciousness functions in the cells apart from the mind. We can observe this vital consciousness in the animal, as well as more subtly in the plant, and we see that it is the foundation of all the movements and reactions of the living organism.

Likewise the existence of a material consciousness in inert matter, which is different in function though continuous with the vital consciousness, cannot long be overlooked by modern thought. Such discovery of the existence of Consciousness in all forms of Force at work in the world, must necessarily change and widen our conception of the word consciousness.

This wider view of consciousness comes closer to the ancient Indian conception of Chit, which as energy creates the worlds and the different grades of substance.

The more we become aware of the minute workings of Nature the more do we see a purposefulness and self-knowledge at work therein. But when we look at Nature as a whole we are inclined at first to see only a chaotic and irrational working. Yet a wider and deeper view convinces us that in all forms of Force, whether physical or seemingly irrational, there is a Consciousness. The Force that builds the worlds is a Conscious Force, just as Existence which progressively manifests therein is Conscious Being.

CHAPTER XI

Delight of Existence: The Problem

By viewing the Absolute (Brahman) in the two phases of Conscious Being and Conscious Force, we do not yet answer the question *why* the infinite perfection should create worlds of forms in its own substance by a force of consciousness. Since the Absolute is eternally free, the only reason for the creation can be the expression of what the Vedantins called Bliss or Delight.

The Absolute is everywhere—in the universe as equally as beyond it —the triple indivisible composite of Being, Consciousness with Force, and Delight of being, (Sachchidananda). The fact that man does not yet experience this integral truth is an indication of his own incompleteness,

Two powerful contradictions in the human mind stand against man's realisation of this Divine delight of existence. These are the emotional reaction of pain, and the ethical problem of evil.

Because pain is an intense feeling to man, it looms larger in his experience than the greater sum of joy inherent in existence. But pain is more intense precisely because it is abnormal—an obstruction even—to our natural being and existence.

The real problem is why suffering exists at all in a world that has issued from, and is occupied by, Sachchidananda.

First we have to realise that God is not separate from evil and suffering, but that He Himself, embodied in all things, bears the evil and the suffering.

Secondly we have to see that what we call evil and suffering, and their opposites good and love, spring from our own dualistic and divided conception of things. Thus we have to see how the problem appears in its original purity, on the basis of unity manifesting as multiplicity. That is, we have to see how the Perfection can admit that which is not perfection.

Our ethical view is necessarily limited to the human standpoint, based as it is on man's emotional reactions. Both material Nature and the animal or vital Nature are non-ethical. Ethics is an intermediary, though necessary, stage in the evolution. It is the means whereby humanity struggles out of a lower harmony, broken up by individual discord in life, towards a higher harmony based on the consciousness of our oneness with all existence.

It is while man is absorbed in this intermediary stage—where the original Perfection of Sachchidananda is seemingly obscured from him—that he experiences the pain and suffering which contradict that Perfection.

First we have to realise that just as the universal Consciousness is vaster than man's present mental consciousness, so the universal Delight of the Divine Nature (that is, of Sachchidananda) is far wider than the individual's ordinary emotional and sensational feeling of joy and pleasure. Delight of being is universal, illimitable, and self-existent. Our emotional pleasure and its opposite pain are as yet a half-formed and divided expression of that pure Delight which is obscured by our present ignorance and egoism.

CHAPTER XII

Delight of Existence: The Solution

We have realised that the Absolute (which is also the secret self of all

things) is an infinite indivisible existence. The essential Nature or Power of this Existence is an infinite Conscious Force, as well as an infinite conscious Delight of being.

We have discovered that Consciousness is hidden in the inconscience and the subconscience; so is Delight (inseparable from Consciousness) present though hidden therein also. In inconscient Matter, Delight expresses itself in the imperishability of material substance; in subconscient life it expresses itself as the instinct of self-preservation; in the half-conscient mentality it appears in a growing sense of immortality; and in the enlightened consciousness it is seen to be at the very root of existence—the Ananda of the ancients.

It is when we see the three inseparable aspects of the Supreme with our divided consciousness that we lose the true Wholeness of Reality. Thus by considering only the pure Existence as real, the world itself becomes an illusion, a Maya.[1] Similarly by considering Consciousness and Force as the sole reality we see only the dual play of Nature and Spirit opposed to each other.

When we see world-existence as essentially a self-delight of being we have the key to the reconciliation of these diverse and conflicting views. Force itself is a creative Consciousness whose movement is the play of infinite Delight of being.

The solution lies in seeing the triune view of the universe as that integral Unity which is both the one indivisible Conscious Being behind all our experiences, as well as the conscious Being in us, our innermost self.

We have to see the vaster, profounder Consciousness—the superconscient —behind the superficial experience of our surface awareness, which is dependent on that. To live in those depths is to be directly aware of the profound calm and joyous presence which is the source of our being and of all things.

But the greater conquest comes when the surface being itself responds directly to this vast Bliss-Self, which can then convert the imperfection into true and perfect values.

The important step is that the mental being must change the habits of the nervous reactions themselves; so that one becomes master of one's responses

[1] In this respect we should note that the Sanscrit word Maya has undergone a significant change. Originally it has a creative or formative meaning, an all-embracing power in its cosmic activity; but later the term came to denote the creator (or creatrix) of illusion, and hence the symbol of illusion.

to the contacts of the world. This results in the true possession of freedom by the mental being, and must be achieved as a natural development by the aid of one's will.

Pain is a danger signal for the individual, to which he instinctively reacts for his own preservation. It is necessary so long as the individual is a limited entity exposed to the shocks of multitudinous forces. Nevertheless it is a transitional phase out of which the mind of man can grow, when the soul can bring the true essence or taste (as 'rasa') to his consciousness.

Art and poetry are aids to man in breaking from egoistic sensation and experiencing the universal delight in things. This is a step towards the universalised outlook, when detachment is combined with a sympathy with all things in our emotional being.

The first step in the soul's self-discipline towards the shocks of existence is to face them with a calm neutrality. The aim must be the possession of an all-pervading, equal delight. Thus may the individual eventually reproduce in his whole nature the unity, the harmony, the oneness-in-all of the supreme Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

N. PEARSON.

THE HUMAN CYCLE

(An Abridgement)

CHAPTER VIII

Civilisation and Barbarism

Once we have determined that this rule of perfect individuality and perfect reciprocity is the ideal law for the individual, the community and the race, we have to try to see more clearly what we mean when we say that self-realistion is the sense, secret or overt, of individual and social development. The Self of man is a thing hidden and occult, it is not his body, his life, not even his mind. Therefore neither the fullness of his physical, vital nor his mental nature can be either the last term or the true standard of his self-realisation. The time is passing away, permanently—let us hope—for this cycle of civilisation, when the entire identification of the self with the body and the physical life was possible, the primary characteristic of complete barbarism. The stress of modern civilisation is changing the vital attitude. Moreover, the message 'Educate thyself' is universally accepted. This is, in essence, a return to and a larger development of the old Hellenic ideal, with a greater stress on capacity and utility and a very diminished stress on beauty and refinement. The old Hellenic or Graeco-Roman civilisation perished, among other reasons, because it only imperfectly generalised culture in its own society and was surrounded by huge masses of humanity who were still possessed by the barbarian habit of mind. The modern world does not leave room for a repetition of the danger in the old form or on the old scale. Science is there to prevent it. It has armed the civilised races with weapons of organisation and aggression and self-defence which cannot be successfully utilised by any barbarous people, unless it ceases to be uncivilised and acquires the knowledge which Science alone can give. It is true that the first tendencies of Science have been materialistic, but whatever its apparent tendencies, it has been really an assertion of man the mental being and the supremacy of intelligence. But if Science has thus prepared us for an age of wider and deeper culture, it has en-

couraged more or less indirectly both by its attitude to life and its discoveries another kind of barbarism, that of the industrial, the commercial, the economic age which is now progressing to its culmination and its close. The essential barbarism of this is its pursuit of vital success, satisfaction, convenience for their own sake. The vital part of the being is an element in the integral human existence as much as the physical part; it has its place but must not exceed its place. Therefore in a commercial age with its ideal, vulgar and barbarous, the soul of man may linger for a while for certain gains and experiences, but cannot permanently rest.

CHAPTER IX

Civilisation and Culture

Nature starts from Matter, develops out of it its hidden life, releases out of involution in life all the crude material of Mind and, when she is ready, turns Mind upon itself and upon Life and Matter in a great mental effort to understand all three. It is only at this fourth stage of her progress that she arrives at humanity. It would seem at first sight that since man is pre-eminently the mental being, the development of the mental faculties and the richness of the mental life should be his highest aim. But here there is a double motive of Nature: man is here to learn from her how to control and create, not only his own inner existence, his own mentality, but also to control and recreate correspondingly his environment. And then there comes the question whether he is not intended not only to expand inwardly and outwardly, but to grow upward. We must recognise both his need of integrality and his impulse of self-exceeding if we would fix rightly the meaning of his individual existence and the perfect aim and norm of his society. The pursuit of mental life for its own sake is what we mean by culture; but the word is still a little equivocal. There is in our mental existence a lower and fundamental stratum, nearest to the vital in the scale of evolution. Above this is the intellectual being, but the rational intellect and the rational will are not the whole of it. There enters into it a deeper, more intuitive, more splendid and powerful, but much less clear, much less developed and as yet hardly at all self-possessing light and force for which we have not even a name.

The very complexity of his mental being is man's great embarrassment. His reason is a judge who gives conflicting verdicts. Still in the midst of it all he has formed certain large ideas of culture and the mental life and shaped

into a general system of curves his many attempts to arrive either at an exclusive standard or an integral harmony. We must fix upon this distinction that barbarism is that state of society in which man is almost entirely preoccupied with his life and body, his economic and physical existence, and has few means and little inclination to develop his mentality, while civilisation is the more developed state of society in which to a sufficient social and economic organisation is added the activity of the mental life in most if not all of its parts. But in a civilised society there is still the distinction between the partially, crudely, conventionally civilised and the cultured. The last generation drew emphatically the distinction between the cultured man and the Philistine. Roughly, the Philistine is the average sensational man who lives outwardly the civilised life, he is in fact the modern civilised barbarian. The Philistine is not dead, but he no longer reigns and has been replaced by the modern giant reading public. It is his coming which has been the precipitative agent for the reshaping of the modern world. The result has been to cheapen thought and art and literature. The higher mental life has been democratised, sensationalised, activised, with both good and bad results. Through it all the eye of faith can see perhaps that a crude but enormous change has begun, which will create perhaps one day the as yet unknown phenomenon, a race of men—not only a class—who have to some extent found and developed their mental selves, a cultured humanity.

CHAPTER X

Aesthetic and Ethical Culture

The idea of culture begins to define itself a little more clearly, or at least it has put away from it in a clear contrast its natural opposites. Not to live principally in the activities of the sense-mind, but in the activities of knowledge and reason and a wide intellectual curiosity, the activities of the enlightened will which make for character and high ethical ideals and a large human action, not to be governed by our lower or our average mentality but by truth and beauty and by the self-ruling will is the ideal of a true culture and the beginning of an accomplished humanity. But still on this higher plane we are apt to be pursued by old exclusivenesses and misunderstandings —the frequent quarrel between culture and conduct, between Hebraism and Hellenism. The source of the conflict arises from the triangular disposi-

tion of the higher or more subtle mentality: a side of will, conduct, character which creates the ethical man, and another side of sensibility to the beautiful which creates the aesthetic man, looking askance at each other with mutual distrust or even reprobation. Society is only an enlargement of the individual and the contrast and opposition reproduces itself in social and national types. The best examples of the ethical mind will, however, be found not in the middle-class puritanism nor of the aesthetic mind in Bohemian society. We have to go further back and contrast rather Republican Rome or Sparta with Periclean Athens. Republican Rome presents itself as an almost unique experiment in high will and strong character-building divorced from sweetness and light. Early Rome and Sparta were barren of thought, art, poetry, literature, the larger mental life. The end of these purely ethical cultures bears witness to their insufficiency. On the other hand we are tempted to give the name of a full culture to all those periods and civilisations which have encouraged a freely human development and like ancient Athens have concentrated on beauty and the delight of living. There were in the Athenian development two distinct periods, one of art and beauty and one of thought. But without character, without some kind of high and strong discipline there is no enduring power of life. It could only think, it could not successfully practice. The insufficiency of the aesthetic view of life becomes yet more evident when we come down to the other great example, Italy of the Renaissance, when aesthetic culture was divorced from the ethical impulse. The subsequent prostration and loose weakness of Italy was the inevitable result of the great defect of its period of fine culture, for if the ethical impulse is not sufficient by itself for the development of the human being, yet are will, character, self-discipline, self-mastery indispensable to that development. Neither the ethical being nor the aesthetic being is the whole man, nor can either be his sovereign principle. They must be taken up and enlightened by a higher principle capable of understanding both equally, their purposes and potentialities. That higher principle seems to be provided for us by the human faculty of reason and intelligent will.

CHAPTER XI

The Reason as Governor of Life

Reason using the intelligent will for the ordering of the inner and the outer life is undoubtedly the highest developed faculty of man at his presen

point of evolution. The instinct of man when he finds his manhood is to seek after a rule of life, to be master of his nature and free. No doubt all is work of Nature and this too is Nature, but still it is a second kind of Nature: a stage of being in Nature becomes self-conscious in the individual, turns its consciousness upon itself. That turning of the consciousness upon itself and on things, which man represents has been the great crisis, a prolonged and developing crisis, in the terrestrial evolution of the soul in Nature. The intellectual reason though not man's only means of knowledge has this advantage over others that it can disengage itself from the work, stand back from it to study and understand it disinterestedly. Therefore is reason science, conscious art, invention. It is observation and can seize and arrange truth of facts; it is speculation and can extricate and forecast truth of possibility. Recently, however, there has been a very noticeable revolt against the sovereignty of the intellect, the thinking mind of the race has become more disposed to question itself, to ask whether existence is not too large, profound, complex and mysterious a thing to be entirely seized and governed by the powers of the intellect. Vaguely it is felt that there is some greater godhead than the reason. The highest power of reason is the disinterested seeking after knowledge. If from the beginning we have only particular ends in view, then we limit our intellectual gain, limit our view of things. At the same time even as others are subject to the tyranny of interests, prejudices, instincts or passions, so the man who is capable of governing his life by ideas is subject to the tyranny of ideas. The ideas are to a certain extent fulfilled, they triumph for a time, but their very success brings disappointment and disillusionment; they themselves are often vitiated by compromises when they are not partial and insufficient. This is the cause why all human systems have failed in the end. But behind all this continuity of failure there has persisted a faith that the reason of man would end in triumphing over difficulties. This is seen especially in the efforts of modern Science and its claim to lay down finally all the true principle and the sufficient rule of process not only for all activities of Nature, but for all the activities of man. It has done great things, but it has not been in the end a success. The human mind is beginning to perceive that it has left the heart of every problem untouched and illumined only outsides and a certain range of processes. The whole difficulty of reason in trying to govern our existence is that because of its inherent limitations it can create either a series of more or less empirical compromises or else a series of arbitrary and practically inapplicable or partially applicable sys-

tems. It is of course possible to limit the use of reason to an immediate, an apparent vital and physical practicality, but in this it cannot rest long satisfied. For his nature pushes him towards the heights, to things yet unachieved and even immediately impossible. But when it attempts this higher action reason separates itself from life. The idealist, the thinker, the philosopher, the poet and artist, even the moralist, all those who live much in ideas, when they come to grapple at close quarters with practical life, seem to find themselves somewhat at a loss and are constantly defeated in their endeavour to govern life by their ideas. Reduce your ideal to a system and it at once begins to fail. The root of the difficulty is that at the very basis of all our life and existence, internal and external, there is something on which the intellect can never lay a controlling hand, the Absolute, the Infinite. It is because this is the reality of our existence that the intellectual reason and the intelligent will cannot deal with life as its sovereign, even though they may be at present our supreme instruments and may have been in our evolution supremely important and helpful. The real sovereign is another than the rational intelligence. Man's impulse to be free, master of Nature, in himself and his environment, cannot be really fulfilled until his self-consciousness has grown beyond the rational mentality, become aware of the true sovereign and either identified itself with him or entered into constant communion with his supreme will and knowledge.

CHAPTER XII

The Office and Limitation of the Reason

The reason cannot give the perfect law of our being, the rational or intellectual man is not the last and highest ideal of manhood, nor a rational society the last and highest perfection of an aggregate human life. Meanwhile the reason performs its function, takes man to the gates of a greater self-consciousness, correcting each lower member from its self-absorbed action. It also tries to fix rules, but this soon becomes a force for limitation and then it has to bring in its own saving faculty of doubt.

But the action of the intelligence is not only turned downward and outward, it has an upward and inward eye. It is opened in this power of vision to a Truth above it, only the forms we give it are intellectual, they themselves descend from a plane of truth of being where knowledge and force are one.

Unfortunately, when intellectually stated these become conflicting ideals. As it is, the individual and social progress proceeds by bringing out numberless possibilities, by creation of different types, by a constant swinging backward and forward between the various possibilities and the different elements to be harmonised, of each of them divided against itself,—and each and all of these corresponding to some truth of his social being, some need of his complex social nature.

The subjective view of human life gives us a truer vision of the place of the intellect in the human movement. The intellect has a double working: the one is a disinterested pursuit of truth for the sake of Truth and the other is coloured by the passion for practice. It is precisely in the putting of knowledge at the service of life that it falls into confusion and imperfection, first, because it thus becomes the servant of something other than pure truth and, secondly, the moment ideas are applied to life they become the plaything of forces over which the reason has little control. Science and idealistic philosophy, no less than organised religion, with their opposite results and uses are there to prove it. The truth is that upon which we are now insisting, that reason can in its nature be used and has always been used to justify any idea, theory of life, system of society or government, ideal of individual or collective action, or any combination of these ideas, to which the mind of man attaches itself for the moment or through centuries.

This truth is hidden from the rationalist because he is supported by two constant articles of faith, first that his own reason is right and the reason of others who differ from him is wrong and, secondly, that whatever may be the present deficiencies of the human intellect, the collective human reason will eventually be able to found thought and life securely on a clear satisfying basis. Both are errors and yet contain a truth. The reason cannot grasp all truth in its embrace, but still it does grasp the something of it which we immediately need, and its insufficiency does not detract from its value; its inconstancy, its divisibility against itself, its power of sustaining opposite views are rather the whole secret of its value. Also, though reason cannot found a perfect life for man or for society, it can by constant enlargement, purification, openness arrive at an intelligent sense even of that which is hidden from it, till, its limits reached, it can say to man: "There is a Soul, a Self, a God in the world and in man who works concealed and all is his self-concealing and self-unfolding. Remove the veil between you and him: then you will know yourself, become the possessor or at least

the receiver and instrument of a higher will and knowledge than mine, and lay hold at last on the true secret and the whole sense of a human and yet divine living."

CHAPTER XIII

Reason and Religion

It would seem then that reason is an insufficient, often an inefficient guide for humanity in that great endeavour which is the real heart of human progress. If that is the truth, then neither the Hellenic nor the modern ideal can be either the highest or the wisest goal of social development. The Hellenic ideal was roughly expressed in the Latin maxim, a sound mind in a sound body, interpreting both ideas in a Greek sense. But both the Hellenic and the modern mind take it that man is partly a mental, partly a physical being with a mentalised physical life as his field and reason for his highest attribute and possibility. The most advanced tendency of a subjective age leads us back to a still more ancient truth. If this view is to be accepted, there must be a superior range of being with its own proper powers,—liberated soul-faculties or spiritual will and knowledge higher than the reason and intelligent will. Otherwise we turn back, as in the theory of ancient Indian culture, to a spiritualised typal society. But the typal principle cannot be the foundation of an ideal human society. It is in the intermediate ages that the principle of order takes refuge in a limited perfection, suppressing some elements to perfect others. We shall better understand what may be this higher being and those higher faculties, if we look again at the dealings of the reason with the suprarational and the infrarational in them, between which it stands as a mediator. Its limitations become very strikingly, very characteristically apparent when it is confronted with that great order of psychological truths and experiences which we have hitherto kept in the background—the religious being of man and his religious life. Faced with the phenomenon of religious life the reason is naturally apt to adapt one of two attitudes: either it views the whole thing as a mass of superstitions, a mystical nonsense or it labours to reject or correct its superstitions, crudities, both attitudes shallow in the extreme. The former attitude has on its positive side played a powerful part in the history of human thought, but its intolerant negations are an

arrogant falsity. The inmost essence of religion, apart from its outward machinery, is the search for God and the finding of God. All this has nothing to do with the realm of reason or its normal activities. Its sole legitimate sphere is to explain as best it can, the truth, the experiences, the laws of our supraphysical and spiritual existence. That has been the work of spiritual philosophy in the East, of theology in the West, a work of great importance at moments like the present. In the infrarational sphere, however, the reason might seem justified in its work and entitled to assume a superior role. But to root out the infrarational from religion or to purge religion of any elements necessary for its completeness because its forms are defective or obscure, without having the power to illuminate them from above or within or without replacing them by more luminous symbols, is not to purify but to pauperise. But the relations of the spirit and reason need not be always hostile or without any point of contact. What is impossible or absurd to the unaided reason, becomes real and right to reason lifted beyond itself by the power of the spirit and irradiated by its light.

SISIR KUMAR GHOSH.

REVIEW

The White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi *By*: *D. Mackenzie Brown.* University of California Press, Berkley 4, California. Pp. xv+205, Price $ 3.75.

Political Science in India has never been an independent subject of study and practice with its own norm and pragmatic basis as pursued elsewhere. It is an integral part of the total life-perspective that has governed Indian thought and living throughout its history. The Science of Polity, *Artha-sastra,* is really the Indian Ideal of Dharma—the Natural Law of Truth and Right—projected and applied in the field of socio-political relations of man with man in community. The organisation of society and the evolution of a system of government that would best ensure a coordinated progress of the individual and the collectivity towards a Goal of fulfilment through a multi-form graded order of life has been the main aim of Indian political Science. Modern students of the subject are apt to miss this central truth and either read in it their own ideas imbibed from their study of the political experiments in European and Mediterranean countries, or failing to grasp the true spirit behind the lines and forms of this Polity treat them as nothing more than the first crude attempts at political evolution among primitive peoples. The author of the present book, however, is a striking exception. His very choice of the title shows how deeply he has entered into the spirit of this aspect of Indian Culture and tradition. "Indian political thought", he writes "cannot be isolated from the main body of Hindu philosophy. In the West we have accepted a tradition, partly Machiavellian, of a science of government which rests upon its own empirical basis. But the great works of Indian Polity are...one facet of a vast and integrated system of reasoning which poses and interprets the very problem of human existence." (P. 6) Citing a happy passage from the Ramayana which describes the coronation of Sri Rama under the canopy of the *śvetacchatra,* the White Umbrella, the author points out that though the *śvetacchatra* is the ancient symbol of monarchical power,[1] "in a larger sense, the white umbrella symbolises the

[1] Dr. Brown's Note on the Umbrella is very interesting and well worth reproduction for the benefit of the reader:

sovereign power of the world—the protective, sheltering Dharma or 'Firmament of Law' whose instrument the king becomes when he receives the umbrella at the coronation ritual. The ruler and his administration are thereby obligated to conduct the government in accord with the highest ethical principles of the Hindu tradition" (p. 157).

What about Kautilya, what about the callous canons of Shukra, one may ask. The author anticipates this objection and points out that while at first sight there may appear to be exceptions, "further consideration reveals a careful orenting of the political with the philosophical and ethical tenets of Hinduism. Even Kautilya, for instance, advises the king as follows: Restraint of the organs of sense on which success in study and discipline depends, can be enforced by abandoning lust, anger, greed, vanity...whosoever is of reverse character...will soon perish, though possessed of the whole earth bounded by the four quarters." (p. 7).

The book is divided into two parts, the first dealing with Ancient Political Thought comprising representative selections (with suitable introductions and analyses) from the *Manu-Samhita*, the Code of Manu, the oldest known book on Hindu Law enjoying precedence over all other codes, the *Shānti-Parvan* which contains the gist of political wisdom in the Epic of Vyasa, the celebrated *Arthasastra of Kautilya*[1] and the comparatively later *Shukra-*

"The Umbrella also symbolises religious authority and is used with persons of high spiritual attainment, such as the heads of the great religious centres founded by the Hindu leaders Shankara and Ramanuja. The author has seen the umbrella employed in ceremonial processions in India. This varied use illustrates the ultimate common basis of spiritual and temporal authority in the Indian tradition. The umbrella symbol is of very great antiquity and is found in many Middle East and Far East areas. It was carried into Malaya and Indonesia by the South Indian Tamils, whose influence begins at least as early as the second Century. In the great States which developed in these areas, the elaborate court procedure of the Hindus was established—including the insignia of the Royal Umbrella. Even the later Mohamedan sultans retained the earlier procedures and symbols, which are in use in some areas Umbrella is yellow rather than white. In India itself the Umbrella symbol was used in comparatively recent times notably by Shivaji, leader of the great seventeenth century Maratha empire in western India. He proclaimed himself after the coronation ceremony as *Cchatrapati* or 'Lord of the Umbrella'."

[1] Writing about this important treatise which was first published as late as 1909 by Sri Shama Sastry and caused 'something like an upheaval in Indian political studies' the author raises an interesting question:"Did Machiavelli find his inspiration and model in Kautilya? The first Europeans visited India in the fifteenth century, and the Portugese opened an all-water route to Calucut in 1498. Fifteen years later Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*. Did some European bring back an Arabic or other translation of the *Arthasastra* which Machiavelli used and never acknowledged? Such a simple explanation is hardly pos-

Niti which "represents primarily the last summing up of Hindu political thought, borrowing freely...from the Mahabharata, Manu, and even Kamandaka, and thus indirectly from Kautilya". The second part, Modern Political Thought, gives a rapid account of the political ferment caused by the Indian Renaissance in the last century and this is followed by a series of extracts from the writings of Vivekananda, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Gandhiji, "the four later thinkers" who the author adds, "stand out for the depth, completeness and stimulation of their philosophies." (p. 85) The reader would notice a gap between the ancient and the modern contributions viz. the Moslem, particularly the Moghul influence on the evolution of Indian political thought. The author would seem to have left it out as this represented an alien element which "was never truly assimilated into the classical tradition". However, we cannot help feeling that that it would have added to the representative character of the work if a chapter had been devoted to this topic.

With admirable clear sight the author traces certain common threads that give continuity and the principles giving unity to the Indian political tradition down the millenniums. "Dharma" he points out, "is the core concept of Hindu political theory, profound in its implications and subject to varied definition. Ultimately it is more than law, for it is what underlies and creates law in the universe." "Dharma (is) not a creed or religion but a mode of life or a code of conduct, which regulated a man's work and activities as a member of society and as an individual and was intended to bring about the gradual development of a man and to enable him to reach what was deemed to be the goal of human existence. It is not surprising therefore, that Hindu law began with duties rather than with rights, as in the West. ...Politics was considered the 'master science', since dealing with Dharma, it covered that vast range of human relationships that MacIver has so aptly termed

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sible—aside from textual considerations—for there are innumerable examples in European literature beginning as early as A.D. 800 of manuals of practical statecraft for the guidance of the king. If Kautilya was ever a model, the influence must have long preceded Machiavelli's time. Also, we have seen a possible parallel influence in the Shantiparvan." (p. 50-51)

The author's remarks while dealing with certain criticisms of this work are to be noted: "Although Kautilya has become a symbol of cold and cynical realism in Indian thought, such characterisation is not entirely deserved. The Shantiparvan, too, has its realism, as have other classical writings. And despite this feature, we find the *Arthasastra* thoroughly grounded on Brahmanical doctrine....Whatever our individual appraisal may be, few will fail to see the ironical relevancy of Kautilya's analysis of foreign policy to our present-day problems of power politics." (p. 52)

'the firmament of law'. In this respect, Dharma is the creator of the state, and political science is more than a study of government."[1] (Pp. 15-16)

The King was the instrument, the first servant of Dharma. He held power not by any divine right inviolable, but as the chosen executor and guarantor of Dharma. He had no right to interfere with it. If any change was sought to be made in the mode of the workings of Dharma, it had to be done in consultation with the representatives of the various interests in the realm. Wherever the king tried to strike at Dharma he was removed by the will of the people. As Sri Aurobindo points out; "In spite of the sanctity and prestige attaching to the sovereign it was laid down that obedience ceased to be binding if the king ceased to be faithful executor of the Dharma."[2]

Monarchy was the normal form of government in India though there are instances of republics or *Ganas* regarding which the author remarks with a visible note of irritation, 'much has been made of these states by Jayaswal and others as proving a democratic tradition in India.' Sri Aurobindo drew attention to this failing of modern Indian scholarship when he wrote, now four decades ago; "Indian scholars have attempted to read the modern ideas and types of democracy and even a parliamentary system into the past of India, but this seems to me an ill-judged endeavour. There was a strong democratic element, if we must use the western terms, in Indian polity and even institutions that present a certain analogy to the parliamentary form, but in reality these features were of India's own kind and not at all the same thing as modern parliaments and modern democracy."[3]

Interwoven with the master idea of Dharma was the institution of *Varna* Class, the fourfold order of the socio-political set-up which has come in

[1] The author also notes: "Some modern Hindu positivists, however, follow the Austinian school of legal theory and contend that Dharma is itself the creationof the state, since it is obeyed only because of the coercive power of the latter. This is contrary not only to Hindu tradition but to the findings of such modern scholars as MacIver." (p. 166)

Vide Sri Aurobindo: *Foundations of Indian Culture* (p. 372-3): "A greater sovereign than the king was the Dharma...this impersonal authority was considered sacred and eternal in its spirit and the totality of its body, always characteristically same, the changes organically and spontaneously brought about in its actual form by the evolution of the society being constantly incorporated in it, regional, family and other customs forming a sort of attendant and subordinate body capable of change only from within,—and with the Dharma no secular authority had any right of autocratic interference."

[2] *Foundations of Indian Culture*, p. 367

[3] ibid p.

for so much ill-informed criticism. The author approaches this question in an understanding spirit and quotes Tagore explaining it "as India's attempt to solve her complex social and racial problems by a system of specialisation and toleration that minimised the frictions of ruthless competition." (p.22) Note also the dictum in *Shukraniti*, "Not by birth are the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra and Mleccha separated, but by virtue and works", and the author's comment thereon: "The important point here is that persons are given caste or class status in terms of their actual work and individual character and ability, rather than by birth. In a basic sense, however, this is not inconsistent with traditional Hindu principles, for we find a similar viewpoint in Manu (XII.114) 'Even if thousands of Brahmans who...are unacquainted with the Veda...meet, they cannot form a (judicial) assembly."[1] Speaking of the relations of the State with other States i.e. international relations, the author writes: "The

[1] It will be apposite and instructive to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on the subject of the Chaturvarna in India. Here are a few relevant passages:

"The system (of Four Orders) served again as an automatic means of securing a fixed division of labour and a settled economic status, the hereditary principle at first prevailing, although here even the theory was more rigid than the practice, but none was denied the right or opportunity of amassing wealth and making some figure in society, administration and politics by means of influence or status in his own order. For, finally, the social hierarchy was not at the same time political hierarchy; all the four orders had their part in the common political rights of the citizen and in the assemblies and administrative bodies their place and their share of influence.....

The whole Indian system was founded upon a close participation of all the orders in the common life, each predominating in its own field, the Brahmin in religion, learning and letters, the Kshatriya in war, king-craft and interestate political action, the Vaishya in wealth-getting and productive economical function, but none, not even the Shudra, excluded from his share in the civic life and an effective place and voice in politics, administration, justice. As a consequence the old Indian polity at no time developed, or at least it did not maintain for long, those exclusive forms of class rule that have so long and powerfully marked the political history of other countries. A priestly theocracy, like that of Tibet, or the rule of a landed and military aristocracy that prevailed for centuries in France and England and other European countries or a mercantile oligarchy, as in Carthage and Venice, were forms of government foreign to the Indian spirit....

The Indian mind and temperament less exclusively intellectual and vital, more intuitively synthetic and flexible than that of the occidental peoples arrived, not certainly at any ideal system of society and politics, but at least at a wise and stable synthesis—not a dangerously unstable equilibrium, not a compromise or balance—of all the natural powers and orders, an organic and vital coordination respectful of the free functioning of all the organs of the communal body and therefore ensured, although not against the decadence that over takes all human systems, at any rate against any organic disturbance or disorder." (*Foundations of Indian Culture* p.394-6)

Mandala or 'circle of States' was the basis of diplomatic theory. Around any given state was a concentric series of unfriendly and friendly powers whose diplomatic tendencies were predetermined by geographic position. An adjoining state was a natural enemy, and the state beyond it constituted a natural friend, and for each of these categories existed a set of appropriate diplomatic precepts. These rules of diplomacy provide us with some of the most cold-blooded Machiavellian realism in the history of political theory...*Such policies however, were considered proper only in times of national disaster, or, at least, they and their material objectives were relegated to a comparatively low scale of value in contrast to the high codes and goals of Dharma—especially in the field of domestic administration.* (Italics ours). Indeed, the moral behaviour of the ruler may be taken as a corner-stone of Indian thought." (p. 24-25)

It is indeed not easy to make a selection from the writings of Sri Aurobindo on Indian Polity: to choose one portion is to deny oneself the profit of the other. All the same, Dr. Brown has shown foresight in choosing one single question which constantly haunts the student of Indian history and even casts a doubt on the very soundness of Indian political mind viz. the *Failure of Unity*, and giving Sri Aurobindo's challenging reply to the critics of this ancient Polity. "The ancient nations, contemporaries of India, and many younger born than she are dead and only their monuments left behind them. Greece and Egypt exist only on the map and in name, for it is not the soul of Hellas or the deeper nation-soul that built Memphis which we now find at Athens or at Cairo. Rome imposed a political and a purely outward cultural unity on the Mediterranean peoples, but their living spiritual and cultural oneness she could not create, and therefore the east broke away from the west, Africa kept no impress of the Roman interlude,and even the western nations still called Latin could offer no living resistance to barbarian invaders and had to be reborn by the influsion of a foreign vitality to become modern Italy, Spain and France. But India still lives and keeps the continuity of her inner mind and soul and spirit with the India of the ages." (Sri Aurobindo) What is the secret of this survival of the Indian nation? How far was her spiritual and cultural unity translated on the more external levels of political organisation? What were the reasons that stood in the way of the achievement of a synthesised Unity that alone can suit the genius of her people? And what are the future prospects? These are some of the pertinent questions that have been raised and answered by Sri Aurobindo in the Essay under reference.

Before concluding we may be permitted to draw the attention of the fair-minded author to an error of fact into which he has been led. Recording the great Homage paid to Sri Aurobindo by Rabindranath Tagore hailing him as "Voice incarnate, free, of India's soul", Dr. Brown makes the following note: "Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, formerly of Calcutta University, who served as Tagore's secretary, has advised me that Tagore, in all probability, was unaware of Ghose's secret political activities at this period and that tribute was therefore in reference to his literary achievements." (p. 176). We are afraid, the author's informant is less than fair to the intelligence of the Poet-patriot in imputing to him ignorance on a matter which was in everybody's knowledge in the intelligentsia of Bengal viz. that Sri Aurobindo was engaged at that itme in momentous political activity, both public and secret. Besides, the Poet himself participated in some of these activities which were strongly influenced, where not personally directed, by Sri Aurobindo and we are quite sure that he was not 'unaware' of things going on around him. Again, the homage was published in September 1907 when Sri Aurobindo was in the centre of the political storm; it was written precisely on the occasion of the Bande Mataram prosecution launched against him. Those lines of surging emotion uttered in the midst of the volcanic political unheaval that shook the land, addressed to

> The fiery messenger that with the lamp of God
> Hath come,

can hardly be passed by as just an Ode by one member of a literary club to another!

M. P. PANDIT